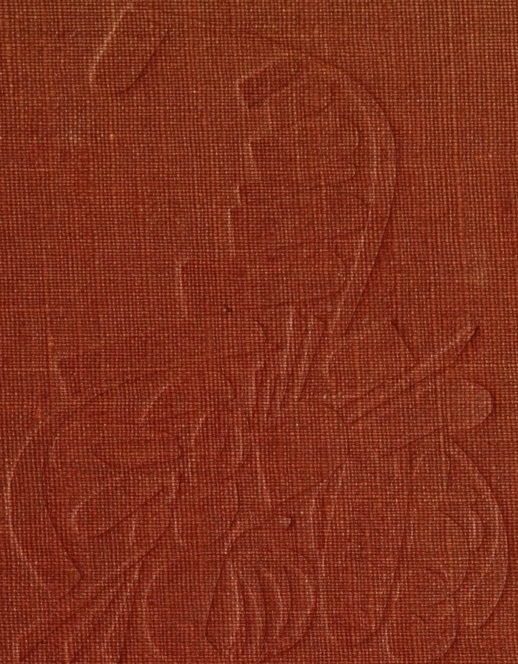


LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 23 1950
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HT421
.R94

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

https://archive.org/details/rurallifeinunite00unse

RURAL LIFE

IN THE UNITED STATES

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 23 1950
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

RURAL LIFE
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BY

CARL C. TAYLOR ARTHUR F. RAPER
DOUGLAS ENSMINGER MARGARET JARMAN HAGOOD
T. WILSON LONGMORE WALTER C. McKAIN, Jr.
LOUIS J. DUCOFF EDGAR A. SCHULER

Division of Farm Population and Rural Life,
Bureau of Agricultural Economics,
United States Department of Agriculture

ALFRED · A · KNOPF

NEW YORK
1949

THIS IS A BORZOI BOOK,
PUBLISHED BY ALFRED A. KNOPF, INC.

COPYRIGHT 1949 BY ALFRED A. KNOPF, INC. *All rights reserved. No part of this book in excess of five hundred words may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages or reproduce not more than three illustrations in a review to be printed in a magazine or newspaper. Manufactured in the United States of America. Published simultaneously in Canada by McClelland & Stewart Limited.*

FIRST EDITION

PREFACE

BECAUSE a textbook in general rural sociology must necessarily be a survey of rural life, it cannot devote more than one or two chapters to topics that may constitute the whole subject matter of a number of specialized books and of whole college courses. Even so, it should deal with all important structural and functional aspects of rural society, all major geographic areas of the country, and all major problems of rural life. This book attempts to do just that.

It is divided into five parts, each containing several chapters. The two chapters of Part I serve as an introduction to this study of rural sociology. The first chapter gives the background of the field of rural sociology as a special science, while the second chapter describes the evolution of the American rural society.

Part II consists of nine chapters, each dealing with a major social institution, organization, or agency of American rural society. With respect to content, this section is entitled "Rural Organization." The emphasis, however, is not entirely on organization, for there are chapters also on rural health, rural welfare, and rural recreation and art, and considerable attention is given to rural problems and their solution.

Part III consists of seven chapters, each of which contributes to an overall picture of the American rural population. They deal with the levels and standards of living of farmers; with owners, tenants, and laborers; and with the differentials in rural society. These chapters also include the characteristics of rural population, its occupational patterns and trends.

Part IV is unique in a book on rural sociology because it discusses seven different type-farming areas of the United States as if each were a cultural region. It is recognized that no one of these seven areas contains an integral culture of its own, but since the cotton, corn, or wheat belts of the United States are larger and contain more population than some whole nations, and since there are marked differences in rural life among these great geographic areas, each one of them warrants integral and separate treatment. Furthermore, anthropologists rather than sociologists are the social scientists who have made most of the cultural-area studies, and they have notably neglected the study of contemporary rural life. The nine chapters of Part IV, therefore, could well be considered a start toward the development of the cultural anthropology of American rural life.

Part V contains three chapters which deal with the relations of farmers to the great society, with their attitudes toward modern life and events, their part in public affairs, and their own large class organizations. It also discusses changes whose directions have marked American agriculture and rural life as a part of all American society.

This textbook has eight authors, each a specialist in the particular field or fields with which he deals. Each chapter is signed by its author or authors, adding a degree of authenticity to what is said. This authenticity, and the basic source materials which are listed at the end of the book, are the only documentation deemed necessary in a textbook designed primarily for use in undergraduate college courses.

CONTENTS

PART I

RURAL SOCIETY AND RURAL SOCIOLOGY

I · Rural Life and Rural Sociology 3
by Carl C. Taylor

II · The Evolution of American Rural Society 13
by Carl C. Taylor

PART II

RURAL ORGANIZATION

III · The Farm Home and Family 39
by Margaret Jarman Hagood

IV · Rural Neighborhoods and Communities 55
by Douglas Ensminger

V · Rural Trade Areas and Villages 78
by Douglas Ensminger and T. Wilson Longmore

VI · The Rural School and Education 92
by Douglas Ensminger

VII · The Rural Church and Religion 116
by Douglas Ensminger

VIII · Rural Local Government 134
by Douglas Ensminger and T. Wilson Longmore

IX · Rural Health 157
by Douglas Ensminger and T. Wilson Longmore

x · Rural Welfare 178
by Louis J. Ducoff and Margaret Jarman Hagood

xi · Rural Recreation and Art 194
by Edgar A. Schuler and Carl C. Taylor

PART III

RURAL PEOPLE

xii · Rural Population Characteristics 217
by Margaret Jarman Hagood

xiii · Dynamics of Rural Population 233
by Margaret Jarman Hagood

xiv · Occupational Patterns of Rural Population 245
by Louis J. Ducoff and Margaret Jarman Hagood

xv · Landowners and Tenants 264
by Arthur F. Raper and Carl C. Taylor

xvi · Farm Laborers 281
by Louis J. Ducoff

xvii · Levels and Standards of Living 295
by Edgar A. Schuler and Walter C. McKain, Jr.

xviii · Rural Social Differentials 309
by Arthur F. Raper

PART IV

RURAL REGIONS

xix · Rural Culture 329
by Arthur F. Raper and Carl C. Taylor

xx · The Cotton Belt 344
by Arthur F. Raper

xxi · The Corn Belt 360
by Carl C. Taylor

XXII · The Wheat Areas 383
by Carl C. Taylor

XXIII · The Range-Livestock Areas 399
by Carl C. Taylor

XXIV · The Dairy Areas 414
by Arthur F. Raper

XXV · The Western Specialty-Crop Areas 434
by Walter C. McKain, Jr.

XXVI · The General and Self-Sufficing Areas 446
by Arthur F. Raper

XXVII · Comparisons and Contrasts of Major Type-Farming Areas 464
by Arthur F. Raper

PART V

FARMERS IN A CHANGING WORLD

XXVIII · Farm People's Attitudes and Opinions 495
by Edgar A. Schuler and Carl C. Taylor

XXIX · The Farmers' Movement and Large Farmers' Organizations 510
by Carl C. Taylor

XXX · Significant Trends and Direction of Change 522
by Carl C. Taylor

BIBLIOGRAPHY 535

INDEX *follows page* 549

PLATES

FACING PAGE

1. Aerial view showing pattern of settlement in the corn belt 12
2. Aerial view of a Mississippi cotton plantation 12
3. Aerial view of a Mormon village in Utah 13
4. Aerial view of a French line village in Louisiana 13
5. Aerial view of a co-operative settlement at Lake Dick, Arkansas 13
6. A Southern farm family 44
7. The women of this farm family prepare and serve a meal for the men who have been working 44
8. Discussing the topics of the day at a neighborhood store 45
9. Quilting bee 45
10. Farm women chat across the counter with the grocer 108
11. Children from rural school near by brought to township school for hot lunch 108
12. The old-fashioned one-room school still exists in a number of places 109
13. Rural church 109
14. "We, the jury, find the defendant not guilty." 140
15. Country doctor examines young patient 140
16. Alabama farmers inquire about their cotton allotments under the A.A.A. 141
17. Farm youngsters fishing 141
18. A farmer grinding a tool in his machine shop 268
19. Bean pickers at work 268
20. Farm migrants on the move 269
21. Submarginal farm near Newport, Washington 269
22. Farmer harrowing a field with team 300
23. Mechanized farming: discing a field 300
24. Mexican cotton pickers on a farm in Arkansas 301

FACING PAGE

25. A skilled farm hand operating a single-row corn picker on Pennsylvania farm 301
26. Stacking hay 396
27. Farmers in a mechanized crew harvesting grain 396
28. A cowboy at work 397
29. Cattle ranch and range in the Yampa River valley, Colorado 397
30. Dairy farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania 428
31. Type of farming and topography around Hurricane, Utah 428
32. Utah rancher stops irrigating his potato field to talk with F.S.A. Supervisor 429
33. Landscape in Union County, Tennessee 429

TABLES

1. Nationality composition of population of the United States, 1790 16
2. Number of foreign-born farm population and foreign-born farm operators 27
3. Number of foreign-born farm operators and foreign-born farm population by states 28
4. Leading nationality groups in states with large numbers of foreign-born farm operators 28
5. Per cent of farm population, foreign-born white, of foreign or mixed parentage, nonwhite, and native white 29
6. Farms, occupied farm dwellings, and land in farms 40
7. Farms and occupied dwellings on farms, by number of occupied dwellings on farm 41
8. Number and per cent of farms doing business through cooperatives 69
9. Organizations in the Deposit, New York Community 70
10. Selected service establishments in the United States 85
11. Selected wholesalers in the United States 86
12. Selected services associated with types of trade service zones 88
13. Population per retail establishment in the United States 89
14. Primary divisions into which counties are divided 139
15. Rank order of expenditures by towns or townships for certain items 141
16. Number of local governmental units by state 142
17. Regional distribution of units of local government 143
18. Per cent distribution for operation of state and local governments 144
19. Number of counties in the United States, by size of largest city 148
20. Mortality trends in urban and rural communities 159

21. Incidence of disabling illness in rural and urban communities 162
22. Types of disabling illness in urban and rural areas 163
23. Services of physicians and other practitioners in connection with illness, in cities of different sizes 164
24. Frequency of all dental cases in cities and in rural areas 165
25. Changing concepts, ideals, and practices in public welfare administration and procedure 183–185
26. Average monthly payment to recipients of special types of public assistance 188
27. Percentages of heads and housewives in farm operators' households reporting participation in specified types of community activities 199
28. Numbers and percentages of families in the $1,000–$1,249 income class having recreational expenditures of specified types 201
29. Population growth in the United States, urban and rural, 1790–1947 219
30. Population by rural-urban residence 222
31. Distribution of the rural and urban population and of counties by size of largest population center in county 227
32. Rural-urban differences in selected population characteristics 228
33. Crude birth and death rates, and rates of natural increase, 8 most rural states and 8 most urban states 235
34. Net reproduction rates by rural-urban residence 237
35. Net migration from farms, for five-year periods 241
36. Labor force of the United States in two large occupational classes – agricultural pursuits and nonagricultural pursuits 246
37. Trends in proportions of workers employed in agriculture and nonagricultural industries 248
38. Farm operators reporting 100 days or more worked off their farms for pay or profit during a year 250
39. Selected data on workers employed in agriculture 251
40. Industry of employed workers, by rural-urban residence 255
41. Occupation of employed workers, by rural-urban residence 256
42. Median wage-and-salary income of rural-nonfarm and urban families for selected occupations of head of household 257

43. Distribution of employed workers by rural-urban residence for selected nonfarm occupations and industries 259
44. Major industry groups of employed workers, by residence 261
45. Composition of the hired farm-working force in 1945 283
46. Comparisons of wages per man-year of work for industrial and agricultural workers 287
47. Average disbursements per family and percentage of income spent for specified items 300
48. Average outlay of farm families for main categories of consumption, gifts, personal taxes, and savings 307
49. Average value and percentage distribution of gross farm incomes in 16 sample counties 313
50. Average state, county, and precinct residence requirements for voting 318
51. Cotton acreage, number of bales harvested, and average bales per acre 348
52. Number of farm operators in the 690 counties in the cotton belt by tenure 349
53. Percentage change of farmers in eight principal cotton states by race and tenure 358
54. Total population in the United States by nativity, by major type-farming areas 466
55. Percentage distribution of population by urban and rural; percentage of farm operators who did 100 days or more of off-farm work 467
56. Gross and net value of farm products per farm; percentage of gross farm incomes by size 469
57. Rural-farm level of living index, and farm products consumed by farm households 470
58. Percentage distribution of farm operators by tenure 473
59. Farm work done by hired workers 474
60. Farm work done by operators, unpaid family workers, and hired workers 475
61. Monthly percentage distribution of labor required for all farm work in the United States 476
62. Monthly percentage distribution of labor required for all farm work for specified crop and livestock enterprises 477
63. Average value per farm of land and buildings, implements and machinery, and of livestock 480

MAPS AND CHARTS

FIGURE

1. Density of population
    a – 1790 18
    b – 1820 18
    c – 1840 19
2. Density of population
    a – 1870 20
    b – 1920 21
3. The natural community of Maplesville, Alabama 58
4. Visiting pattern of farm families, White Plains neighborhood, Charles County, Maryland 68
5. Various locality groupings in Greene County, Georgia 74
    a – Farm Security Administration districts
    b – "Communities" recognized by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration
    c – White neighborhoods and communities
    d – Soil Conservation Service Priority Committee
6. Types of trade areas in Greene County, Georgia 84
    a – General trade areas
    b – Trade areas for hardware
    c – Trade areas for groceries
    d – Trade areas for banking service
7. Ability of states to support education, per capita income 96
8. Ability of states to support education, income per child 97
9. Farm families spend less than urban families for medical care 168
10. As incomes increase, a larger proportion of farm families buy medical care 169
11. Number of effective physicians, 1940 170

FIGURE
12. Physicians in the United States, 1940 171
13. Hospital beds in the United States, 1940 172
14. Co-ordinated hospital service plan 177
15. Payments for all public aid 189
16. Public assistance recipients and social insurance beneficiaries 190
17. Monthly distribution of estimated man-hours of labor required for livestock, crops, and farm maintenance 197
18. Population growth in the United States, 1790–1946 218
19. Rural-farm population, 1940 224
20. Rural-nonfarm population, 1940 225
21. Movement to and from farms, 1920–45 240
22. Farm population, United States, 1910–46 243
23. Seasonal patterns of farm employment 253
24. Percentage of all farms operated by tenants 265
25. Counties in which at least half the farms were operated by tenants 270
26. Counties in which at least half of the land in farms was under lease to the operator 272
27. Equity of operators in farm real estate 273
28. Volume of foreclosures and assignments, transfers, and value per acre of farm real estate 275
29. What 3,200,000 persons who worked on farms for wages in 1945 were doing in 1946 285
30. Production per worker in agriculture and industry 292
31. Comparison of farm and nonfarm levels of living 298
32. Farm-operator family level-of-living index, 1945 305
33. The six major societal groups 333
34. Rural cultural regions of the United States 335
35. Regionalized types of farming in the United States 340
36. The cotton belt 345
37. Cotton acreage, 1939 347
38. The corn belt 361
39. Corn harvested for grain, 1939 364
40. Number of hogs and pigs sold by farmers, 1939 365
41. The wheat areas 384
42. Acreage of wheat harvested, 1939 385
43. The range-livestock areas 400

FIGURE

44. The dairy areas 414
45. Milk produced on farms, 1939 415
46. The Western specialty-crop areas 435
47. The general and self-sufficing areas 446
48. Percentage of annual amounts of labor used monthly in four types of farming 478

PART I

RURAL SOCIETY AND RURAL SOCIOLOGY

CHAPTER 1

RURAL LIFE AND RURAL SOCIOLOGY

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

THE traditions of America grew out of a history and evolution in which rural life and agriculture were dominant. No student of sociology has, therefore, studied all the major components of American culture until he has studied the immense influence of agriculture and farm people in the creation and continuance of that culture. It is true that only about one in five Americans now live on farms and less than 15 per cent of all persons who are gainfully employed work on farms. But millions of people living in cities were born and reared on farms and about half of the farm boys and girls have for decades moved to towns and cities. These farm to city migrants do and will continue to retain many of the ideologies and attitudes of rural folk and thus they influence as well as are influenced by urban culture.

American rural life is a unique sociological laboratory in and of itself because rural life in the United States is in many ways different from rural life any place else in the world. Furthermore there are great contrasts between various types and classes of farmers within the United States. There are marked differences between modern farmers and farmers of the most primitive societies and between highly commercialized farmers and peasant farmers; and there are also differences between cotton, corn, cattle, and fruit farmers in the United States. In short, there are many different rural societies in the world and a number of rural cultural regions in the United States. Rural sociology studies all of them.

This book is a text in American rural sociology. Practically all that is written here was learned by sociologists who have studied in the specialized laboratory of American rural life. References are made to rural life in other areas of the world only when necessary for purposes of comparison and contrast, or to show the contributions made by other countries to rural life in this country. However, American rural life cannot be adequately understood simply by comparing and contrasting it with the rural life of other countries. Nor can it be understood merely by comparing it with urban life, nor by assuming that rural life is today becoming "urbanized" so rapidly that it is no longer worth specialized study. No one would deny the fact that rural life everywhere is an integral part of all social life, or that the difference between urban and rural life is diminishing. But many well-trained sociologists find it necessary to study rural society because their study develops a body of knowledge useful to all members of society.

The rural aspects of American life can be understood only if they are studied on farms and in communities where farm people live, and American rural sociology has developed to its present status primarily because a great many sociologists have studied rural life at first hand. Probably no body of American sociological literature is more thoroughly based on empirical data than is rural sociology.

Rural life in the United States is of course in some ways like rural life in all times and places. Modern American farmers, like farmers everywhere, produce growing things, not inert mechanical things; they work outdoors under the direct influence of the climate and the seasons, not indoors in a controlled physical environment; and they live and work on separate farms rather than in crowded cities and large factories. Most people who pursue farming, moreover, engage in a combination of manual labor and management, so that they are both workers and entrepreneurs, and never merely manual laborers. Farming in most parts of the world is carried on by means of small enterprises, each managed by a family that lives and works alone. Everywhere in the world the farm family is therefore a relatively cohesive group. The combination of these facts tends to make farm people relatively independent, wherever they may be, and rural society relatively simple as compared with a highly urban society. Birth and marriage rates, for instance, are higher in rural areas than in cities, and rates of crime, suicide, and insanity are lower. These conditions, marking deep and fundamental contrasts between rural and urban life in all countries, also constitute fundamental similarities among all farm people.

The Development of Rural Sociology

Sociology is the study of people and their group relationships. Rural sociology is the study of rural people and their social relationships with one another and with nonrural people. It is, in short, the sociology of rural life. This does not mean that the rural sociologist is different from all other sociologists, or uses different scientific methods. To make scientific studies in the laboratory of rural life requires use of the same methods of investigation and analysis as are used in other sociological studies. All sociologists are concerned with the same basic types of human relations and social processes and many of the same social problems.

Everyone lives by means of social relationships and wants to understand them, and sociologists deal with the theories people have about their social relationships with others. Some popular explanations of human behavior and social relations contain great wisdom, but some of them are very colored, prejudiced, and even false. Scientific sociological explanations may not be perfect either, but they are not colored or prejudiced because they are more nearly objective and are based on the maximum information that is available on each phenomenon or situation being discussed.

It is not easy to make scientific analyses of social relationships. They are both complex and changeable and no social science can be as exact as a physical or even a biological science. Much of it, in fact, is little more than an accurate description of social situations. Thus a part of the science of rural sociology is based on detailed descriptions by persons who have made careful and repeated observations of important situations, problems, and processes in rural life. In many cases this knowledge cannot be presented in any more precise form than that of accurate description, but this is not always a weakness, for accurate description is the first step in analysis. It is highly desirable, however, that the succeeding steps be an analysis of social relations in order to form conclusions about them, with the validity of scientific knowledge.

Yet it is not the sole or even the prime purpose of rural sociology to be merely scientific. Its purpose is to help people understand themselves and one another. Indeed, neither general nor rural sociology would exist if common people and their leaders were not anxious to have a better comprehension of social relations and social problems. Rural sociology has developed in response to definite demands for this better understanding. Some ten years ago Sanderson, Lively, Nelson, and Taylor made an analysis of the history and evolution of rural social research. In this carefully written report on the history and content of rural sociology they said: "The primary aim of rural sociology is the improvement of the social conditions of the people on the land. It originated as a discipline in teaching and research as a part of the general impulse to improve American agriculture technologically, economically and socially."

Rural sociology attempts to assist in this improvement by means of research, college courses, and adult education. As much of the subject matter as possible is based on the findings of field studies, on statistical analysis of farm and rural populations, and on all other data that are available, from whatever valid source. The motives of improvement and reform are stimuli to research and need not in any way compromise the objectivity of such research. In fact, if they did, there would probably be very little demand for social research, because the results would not be trusted. As it is, rural sociologists are called on by others to do research and to assist in action programs because it is believed that they will maintain a high degree of objectivity in studying even the most troublesome problem. In the recent severe depression, for instance, when for the first time in the history of the nation hundreds of thousands of rural people were placed on relief, rural-sociology researchers were called in to study the situation and to help formulate and administer relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement programs. They have since been used increasingly by rural agencies and institutions to assist them in shaping objectives and in making valid analyses of the problems and processes with which they deal. Moreover, persons preparing for professional work in rural areas – teachers, ministers, and even lawyers and physicians – now study rural sociology as a part of their professional training; rural welfare workers, although not so numerous as welfare workers in cities, are now preparing themselves for professional social work in rural areas. As long as rural sociology continues to analyze rural social situations objectively and to apply the findings to active programs, it will develop with increasing acceleration and grow in usefulness.

A concern about social problems and social maladjustment created the demand for rural social research in the United States about forty years ago, and the demand will continue as long as social problems exist. The movement of farm people to towns and cities, the decline in the rural church, the lag in rural education, the loss of farm ownership, and the conviction that rural folk culture was being lost led to the first studies of rural life. Rural social research has developed largely out of the study of what rural people and their leaders thought to be important problems or issues, and rural sociological literature has more or less followed trends in rural life and has dealt with problems brought on by these trends. To be sure, some of the early literature was not thought of as sociology at all, but merely as discussion of rural problems that were of national importance. But three bodies or streams of this literature were gradually joined to form what may be called the beginning of rural sociology. One was the report of the Country Life Commission, which was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt. Another consisted of some Ph.D. theses based on study of rural communities. The third consisted of rural church and school studies made by persons who were concerned with rural maladjustments in these two major social institutions.

To the seven prominent persons whom he appointed to study trends in American rural life, President Theodore Roosevelt said: "No growth of cities, no growth of wealth, can make up for the loss either in the number or the character of the farm population." The Commission itself later stated the issue as follows: "The underlying problem is to develop and maintain on our farms a civilization in full harmony with the best American ideals. To build up and retain this civilization means, first of all, that the business of agriculture must be made to yield a reasonable return to those who follow it intelligently; and life on the farm must be made permanently satisfying to intelligent, progressive people. The work before us, therefore, is nothing more or less than the *gradual rebuilding of a new agriculture and new rural life.*"

The Commission held thirty hearings throughout the country in the last two months of 1908 and circulated more than 500,000 questionnaires to farmers and rural-life leaders, from which 100,000 replies were received and analyzed. It then diagnosed the weaknesses of rural life as being a lack of educational institutions and agencies, a lack of transportation and communication facilities, a lack of capital, inadequate legislation, and scarce or weak farmers' organizations. This report actually provided what might be called a charter for rural sociology, although only one member of the Commission would have considered himself a rural sociologist.

The earliest studies originating in an academic department of sociology were made by three of Professor Franklin H. Giddings's graduate students at Columbia University between 1906 and 1912. Giddings stimulated these three studies as a part of continuous efforts by himself and others to develop a science of society. Each of the three studies was an objective study of a rural community: *An American Town* by James Mickel Williams, *Quaker Hill* by Warren H. Wilson, and *A Hoosier Village* by Newell L. Sims. The students employed statistical, historical, and field-interview techniques, and each study was published as a research document. Together they constitute the first small body of academic literature in the field of rural sociology; and these three scientific studies, plus the public concern for rural well-being that was stimulated by the Roosevelt Country Life Commission, can be identified as the origin of rural sociology in the United States.

Dr. Warren Wilson, the author of one of the rural community studies, became a leader of numerous rural church studies made between 1915 and 1925. In these studies he and the others combined their desires for reform with their university training in sociology. Their works, some rural school studies carried out by similarly trained persons, and Dr. C. J. Galpin's *The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community* which was made at the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin in 1915, furnished about the only systematic literature of rural sociology until Professor J. M. Gillette of the University of North Dakota published the first textbook in rural sociology in 1916. Today there are many textbooks in this field and hundreds of research monographs, while more than eight hundred persons in the United States are teaching or doing research or extension work in rural sociology.

The purpose in recording these bits of early history is to explain how rural sociology developed out of a concern about a changing American rural society and about the problems of adjustment that were incident to trends or change. Rural sociology has always dealt with such problems as tenancy, levels of living, community organization, recreation, health, welfare, and church and school programs and problems. As it has grown in maturity and scope, it has attempted to encompass a complete analysis of the rural segment of society, adding techniques of scientific analysis to the reform impulses of early days.

Because rural life itself is growing more complex, the study of rural life becomes an increasingly complex undertaking. In a modern civilization like that of the United States rural life is not isolated from the life of the remainder of society. Farmers make many trips to town and city centers, market their products there, and purchase a major portion of the things they consume. Moreover, they read the same newspapers and listen to the same radio programs as city people. And many of them dress and act so much like town people that they are no longer called "clodhoppers," "hayseeds," or "rubes." The differences between country and city persons are undoubtedly diminishing steadily, and farm people are participating more and more in the social life of others. There are differences, however, between urban and rural people, as well as differences between urban and rural segments of one society and those of another. One function of rural sociology is to analyze and explain these differences, some of which are superficial, but some of which are very fundamental.

The Importance of Rural and Urban Similarities and Differences

A part of social analysis should be to discover in what ways the rural and urban segments of any given society are different. Some differences are slight and are steadily lessening; others are deep and abiding. All farmers, for instance, depend on land as their basic natural resource, whereas not all urban people depend on the same natural resource. Urban dwellers are employed in hundreds of different occupations and professions, whereas all farmers are employed in the same occupation. Furthermore, this one occupation is quite different from any of the urban occupations and professions. And while farm people today have telephones, radios, and automobiles, so that they can keep in contact with one another and with nonfarm people, they do not live in apartment houses, which enable hundreds and sometimes thousands of people to live on a few acres of land. In fact, there are on the average about 40 persons per square mile in the open country, while in the city there are hundreds and sometimes thousands of persons per square city block. Farmers do not live and move in strait jackets created by traffic rules, factory whistles, and office engagements. Most of them decide for themselves when and how they will work. They have many contacts outside their homes and off their farms, but the work group and the family social circle are much more predominant in their daily lives than in the lives of city people. Not many of these differences can be measured by any exact and precise method, but they can be identified and described by anyone who has had long experience in both urban and rural modes of life.

The farm family, both as a work unit and as a family circle, is more highly cohesive than the typical urban family. Farming in most parts of the world is a family enterprise, and in the United States the vast majority of farms are "family farms." Many of them are actually too small to be adequate economic production units; of more than six million farms, only about 100,000 are either "multiple unit" or "large scale" farms. Even those farms which at some seasons of the year employ more hired than family labor are still family enterprises in which all members participate. The significance of this fact is not appreciated by those who have never experienced its dominating influence in the daily lives of farm people.

Farming as a mode of living, a phrase admittedly used vaguely and romantically by many, is conditioned not so much by living on isolated homesteads in the open country as by the close relations of occupational pursuits, business enterprise, and personal and social behavior, all of which are tied intimately to an individual farm. All members of the family spend part of their lives working on the farm or in the farm home; all are constantly aware of the relation of the money-earning power of the farm enterprise to their level and standard of living; and all know that the necessities and conditions of farm work influence what they can and cannot do personally and socially. Thus, a great deal of their participation in all aspects of life is automatically conditioned by the fact that they are farmers. This is not so universally true of the members of the families of physicians, lawyers, businessmen, artisans, or urban manual laborers. Moreover, few recognize the total significance of the simple connection between the material level of living of farm families and the farm occupation and enterprise. On the average family-type farm, a major portion of the family's food supply is self-produced. In many areas the same is true of fuel; housing is also an integral part of the farm plant.

It is claimed by many that farming is the only occupation in which the worker is dominated by ideals of conservation and nurture of natural resources. While not every farmer is a husbandman, the conservation and improvement of the soil and the constant dealing with growing things undoubtedly do influence his attitude. Soil must be conserved and plants and animals must be nurtured for purely selfish reasons. This does not attribute any special altruism to farmers, but we should recognize that they develop certain habits and attitudes in the necessary practices of conservation and nurture.

These differences between farm and city life should not be obscured by the fact that the isolation of farm people is constantly lessening. It is true that modern means of transportation such as hard-surfaced roads and automobiles, plus modern means of communication such as newspapers, telephones, and radios, have placed farm people in easy contact with one another and with nonfarm people. News, music, ideas, and even fashions and fads flow over these channels of transportation and communication and constantly lessen the differences between urban and rural life. Electrical services and equipment and many other modern conveniences make rural living much more like urban living than it was in the past. But all these things do not alter the fact that for every hour a farmer spends in contact with nonfarm people, he spends a hundred or more hours working in comparative solitude on his farm or wholly within his family circle. And for each day he spends in all his market and trade contacts, he spends at least ten days working alone or with a small group attending to the occupational rather than the business phases of his farm enterprise. All of these practices vary with the type of farming he does: If he is a truck or dairy farmer, his town contacts are greater, whereas if he is a self-sufficient farmer, they are fewer than the average. But in all cases there is a higher degree of personal and social isolation in farming than in any urban occupation, and this factor influences both the personalities of the people and the social life in rural areas.

Moreover, as compared with city people, farm people, by and large, tend to associate more in local neighborhood groups and less in large impersonal groups. Recent studies of attitudes and opinions indicate that there may be some deep fundamental psychological and cultural differences between farm and urban persons. But neither basic nor superficial distinctions between rural and urban people should lead anyone to conclude that all rural persons are alike. There are great variances between isolated subsistence farmers and suburban and industrialized farmers, between wealthy and impoverished farmers, between some owners and some tenants, between transient laborers and all other farm workers, and between corn, cotton, wheat, and dairy farmers. There are differences also between the farm people in areas where there are still many recent immigrants and those in areas that have been occupied for generations by the same families; and between farm people in areas where there are many Negroes, Mexicans, Japanese, and Indians and those in areas that are occupied almost exclusively by white people. There are differences between farmers in areas like the Great Plains, where there are less than 20 persons per square mile, and those in certain places in the Connecticut Valley, where there are more than 400 persons per square mile. And there are differences between people who live on farms and operate them, people who live in towns and operate farms, and people who live in the country and do not farm.

The people who live in small towns or who live in the open country but do not farm are a part of the rural population and must therefore be included in a study of rural life. They are business and professional people who serve farmers, and they are middlemen who handle farm commodities on their way into the markets of the world. They go to the same picture shows and often attend the same churches as farm people, while their children attend the same high schools as farm children. In fact, in most areas of the United States they are an integral part of rural society. But because they have been almost completely neglected by general sociologists and somewhat neglected by rural sociologists, there is relatively little scientific or even objectively descriptive literature on the rural-nonfarm people of the United States. This is unfortunate, for in those characteristics where farm people differ most from urban people, rural-nonfarm people often constitute a cultural bridge between the two.

The Uniqueness of Rural Life in the United States

The settlers of colonial America attempted to perpetuate in the new land the established institutions and traditions of the countries they came from. None of the efforts succeeded for any great length of time, however. Mother countries – chiefly England, Holland, and France – were forced to modify their plans for their colonies, and the colonists very early became more self-governing than governed. The relatively short but completely successful struggle for independence quickly became a tradition that today is maintained in no other segment of American society more strongly than among farmers. Since it is impossible for people to escape entirely from their origins, and since it is impossible for one segment of a national society to be totally independent of other segments of that same society, American agriculture and rural life have always been in the process of changing from old to new ways of working and living, whereas many other agricultural societies are little different today from what they were a thousand years ago. From the beginning colonial society was a melting pot of various peoples, and American agriculture borrowed practices from northern European countries and from the Indians. With the habits brought from Europe, as well as with their own adaptions to the wilderness, the agricultural colonists established their own patterns of land settlement and ownership, built their own types of communities, created their own local governments, and developed both a system of agriculture and a type of rural life that are unique in the world.

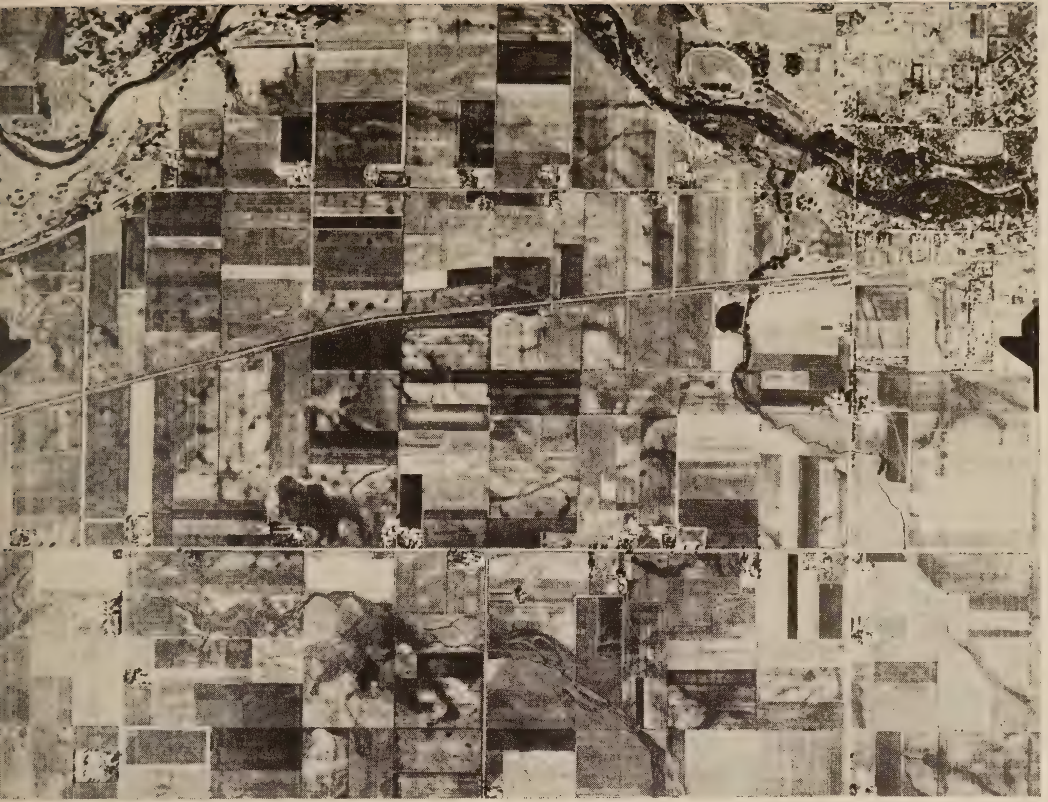
Urban-rural differences are less marked in the United States than in all but a few other countries (notably Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), whose rural societies developed after the advent of the industrial revolution. The rural life of most other countries developed out of feudal systems, and in many cases the farmers are still peasants. In fact, there are millions of farmers in the world today who are farming with oxen or with no animals or motive power whatever, but agriculture in the United States was relatively mechanized even in its earliest days. Furthermore, farming in this country has always been relatively commercialized, and farmers have been comparatively free from the domination of a rich, absentee, urban-dwelling landlord class such as exists in many European and South American countries. In short, rural society in the United States is composed chiefly of operators of small or medium-sized farms who are either owners or tenants, and who live on individual farmsteads and in neighborhoods and communities in which they are not only the dominant occupational group but also the dominant social group. They are not peasants, and they would resent an inference that they occupy a social status inferior to that of any other group of citizens.

Moreover, farm people in the United States have the highest level of living, both materially and culturally, of any farmers in the world. As compared with the masses of farmers in most other countries, they live in more modern houses, dress in modern fashion, for the most part have an abundant food supply, and participate more fully in the educational, health, and recreational facilities of their total society. Like most other American people they do not recognize how unique rural life in the United States is in comparison with rural life in most other parts of the world.

To be sure, there are still areas of the United States where grain is cut with cradles and threshed with flails, where oxen are used as work animals, and where all marketing is done on foot. There are areas, too, where farmers build their own log houses and purchase very little from the market. But these are the back eddies of typical American rural life, whereas they are the customs and practices of millions of farmers in some other areas of the world. Although handicrafts and domestic manufacturing have long since largely left American farms, they are practiced in millions of farmhouses throughout the world, not only among primitive agriculturists, but also among millions of farmers in China, Japan, and India. Even in such modern countries as Austria and Czechoslovakia farm people still weave and spin in their homes and do much of their own milling, smithing, and tanning, on their farms. In fact, there are millions of primitive farmers in the world who gather a large part of their supplies for food, clothing, and shelter directly from nature, and there are millions more who have never seen a motor-driven farm machine.

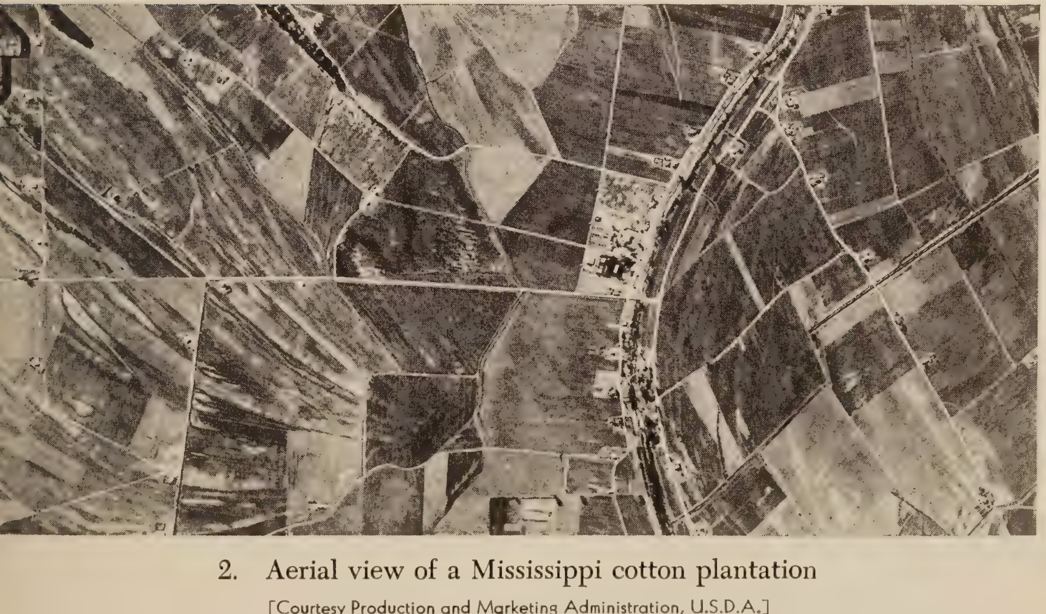
In practically all areas of the world where human power is customarily used in farming instead of animal or motive power, women do a great deal of agricultural work, and even in modern countries like Holland, Germany, France, and Russia it is customary for women to work in the field beside the men. But in the United States, the almost universal use of animal and motive power on farms and the distinctive cultural levels of living have eliminated most women from field work.

Not least among the differences between farmers in the United States and those in many other countries of the world is that the former play a conscious role in national life. The modern American farmer not only votes for and organizes pressure groups to promote his interests, but also has an outstanding set of educational and scientific agencies that are publicly supported on his behalf. These things prevail in many other countries as well, but there are hundreds of millions of farmers in various parts of the world who participate very little in the larger cultural and social institutions of their national societies. American farmers, however, participate in all aspects of their nation's culture.



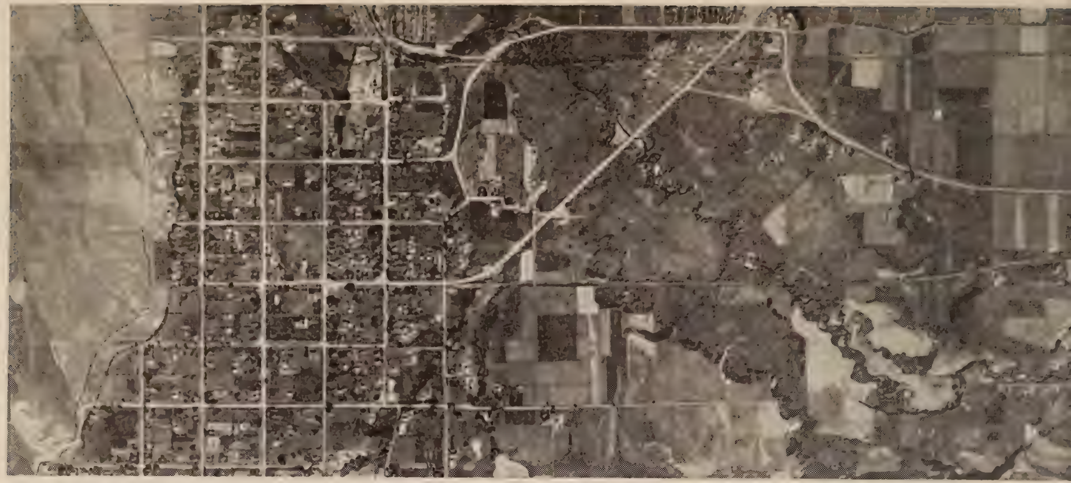
1. Aerial view showing pattern of settlement in the corn belt

[Courtesy Soil Conservation Service, U.S.D.A.]

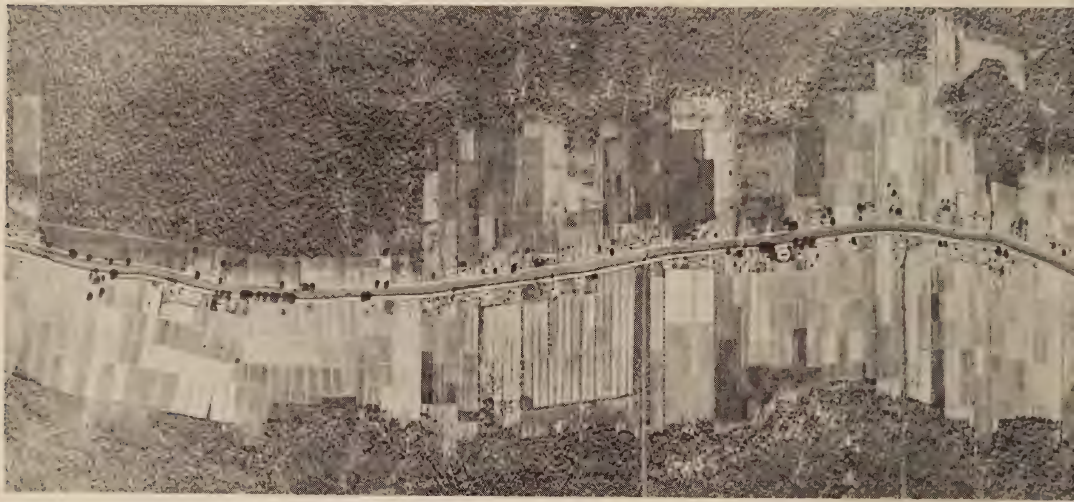


2. Aerial view of a Mississippi cotton plantation

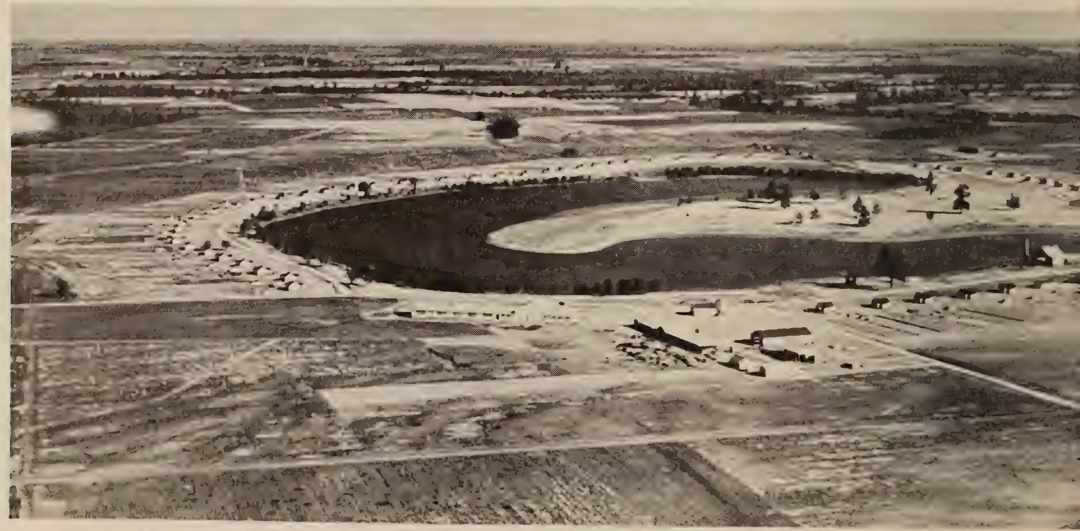
[Courtesy Production and Marketing Administration, U.S.D.A.]



3. Aerial view of a Mormon village in Utah



4. Aerial view of a French line village in Louisiana



5. Aerial view of a co-operative settlement at Lake Dick, Arkansas

[3, 4. Courtesy Production and Marketing Administration, U.S.D.A. 5. Courtesy Division of Information, F.S.A.]

CHAPTER 2

THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN RURAL SOCIETY

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

The Influence of Early Colonial Experiences

Few societies in the world are governed as little by their past as society in the United States. Change has been so rapid in this country, adaptations to new opportunities have been so great, and social experiments so many that each generation almost believes it is building a new economic and social order. And in many ways the stories of these adaptations and experiments are the history of rural America. No society can be understood without knowing its past. There is always a high degree of continuity in its evolution, and each generation begins with a backlog of habits and traditions inherited from preceding generations. Who its predecessors were, where they lived, the type of agriculture they practiced, the types of communities they built, and the aspirations they had for their children, all condition succeeding stages in their social evolution. Even the daily life and thoughts of the earliest white settlers in America help to explain in part and contributes to an understanding of rural America today.

While no attempt will be made here to recount the stories of the various colonial peoples and their settlements, enough of their history must be related to show how it influenced the later development of rural life, and why the early plans for the settlement of this country were not carried out. Some colonies, for instance, were planned as plantations, some even as feudal estates. Some were laid out in large farms, others in small farms, and some with no planned settlement pattern whatever. Some were established as village types of settlement, others were literally isolated homes in the wilderness. Some were peopled with various and diverse groups of dissenters and adventurers, others with cohesive religious or nationality groups. Some early colonists were political prisoners, others were indentured servants. Most of them were poor people. Negro slaves were brought into most colonies at an early date, and the residue of slavery remained until eighty-five years ago.

Early settlers quickly proved that they were primarily interested in establishing homes and developing farms for themselves, as well as in governing themselves. They rebelled against large landowners, against the mother country, and, more important, they moved deeper into the wilderness and established self-governing communities of their own. Only the Negro slaves were unable to escape from the type of life planned for them, and the reason the plantation was the only early land-settlement plan to persist was that its Negro laborers could not avail themselves of cheap and sometimes free land on the frontiers. Even the indentured servants worked out their debts in a few years and quickly became small landholding farmers. The earliest settlers on the great patroon estates in New York soon drifted away into near-by areas, and new colonists refused to take their places. Thus the attempt to perpetuate a feudal system lasted only a few years. The political prisoners brought to establish the Georgia colony were free from the time they arrived. In short, the same forces that today make rural life in the United States unique operated in early colonial days to thwart the plans of the countries that colonized the New World.

Practically all large landowners, except those with slave plantations, found it impossible to retain farm workers in the face of the availability of cheap lands. Consequently, they had to adopt the alternative of selling part of their land to those who wished to be independent farmers. In fact, most colonies sooner or later accepted the inevitable and began offering lands free or cheap as an inducement to immigrants who could and would help to develop economically the territories they controlled. The early establishment of independent, landowning farms and of local self-governing communities marks the great difference between the settlement of North and South America, and between the American type of farmer and the peasant. Thus the early foundations of American democracy were laid deep in the early adaptations to a wilderness environment and to frontier opportunities.

Even with these common experiences, however, not all colonists or colonies were completely similar. In fact, there were three separate areas of colonial settlement in the South and three in the North, from each of which flowed a westward expansion in due time. The type of life prevailing in the Virginia colony founded at Jamestown in 1607 expanded into southern Maryland and into North and South Carolina. The Maryland colony established by a grant to Lord Baltimore in 1652 expanded into western Maryland and into the whole Chesapeake area. The Georgia colony established in 1732 was not a source of colonial expansion until the great movements west and southwest.

In the North, the colony at Plymouth, Massachusetts, was founded in 1621 by the same company (the London Company) that founded Jamestown. And it was the first of thirty-eight similar colonies to be established in New England by 1640. The Dutch West India Company began colonizing the Hudson River area in New York in 1629, and by 1650 had established thirteen colonies. Most of New York was colonized from this source. The first of the William Penn colonies in Pennsylvania was established in 1681, and individuals and families from this and other Pennsylvania colonies moved both west and south in great numbers. In addition to these, there were the Spanish settlements in the Southwest and in Florida, and the French settlement in Louisiana. But it was originally from the six colonial areas just listed that the population expanded to new settlements.

When in 1790, at the end of early colonial expansion, the first Federal census was taken, there were 1,903,000 people in the Southern colonies and 2,026,000 in the Northern colonies. The six most populous states were, in order: Virginia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland. From them went the majority of the people who moved west to settle the new frontier. It is therefore of some importance to know the population composition of these early colonial states. Of the whites, 80.1 per cent were English, 7.0 per cent Scotch, 5.6 per cent German, 1.9 per cent Irish, and 0.5 per cent French. Only 185,000 were foreign-born. There were 757,000 Negroes. The English constituted more than 60 per cent of the whites in all states except New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Scotch had gone chiefly to North and South Carolina and into the frontier colonies of Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The Irish were scattered throughout all the colonies, while the Germans were chiefly in Pennsylvania. The Dutch were practically all in New York and New Jersey. And only New Jersey and South Carolina had any appreciable number of French. In that same year, 80.7 per cent of the total population were white, and 19.3 were Negro. In New England and in the Middle states respectively, only 1.7 per cent and 6.2 per cent were Negro, while in the South, Negroes constituted 35.6 per cent and far outnumbered all nationality groups except the English.

Before turning to a consideration of the various European immigrant groups that composed the expanding population after the colonial period, two other groups should be mentioned. In 1540, eighty years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Coronado crossed the Rio Grande from Mexico and explored as far east as Oklahoma and as far north as Kansas. In 1598, nine years before the English colonists landed at Jamestown, Oñate, with 130 soldiers, a band of Franciscan priests, and 7,000 head of livestock, established a colony at San Juan, New Mexico. Today there are in this general area many Spanish-American farming villages whose origins go back partially to these early migrations. The early Louisiana colonies were also Spanish as well as French. But Spain turned the Louisiana Territory over to the French in 1803, and there are today many French people and a number of French settlements that stem back to this period and to the period immediately following.

In the 183 years between the landing of colonists at Jamestown and the first Federal census, effective settlement had moved inland only about 250 miles. Indeed, most pioneer colonies were not more than 400 miles inland from the Atlantic seaboard, and the nation's population in 1790 was less than four million.

Because of the great diversity of immigrant peoples who have come to the United States in the 160 years or so since colonial days, it is impossible to identify precisely the cultural residues of each early colony. That there are such residues, however, cannot be doubted. Many of the early Southern colonies did not admit Catholic settlers; on the other hand, Lord Baltimore's original Maryland colony was primarily Catholic. Most of the New England colonists were Puritans; those in New York and New Jersey were Dutch Reform; while Penn's colonies welcomed people of all creeds and races. The diluted influence of each of these groups can be identified today in those areas of the country to which each early colony contributed a major portion of westward migrants. Thus the influence of the New England and New York colonies is felt in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana; of the Pennsylvania colonies, in western Maryland and the Shenandoah Valley; and of the Southern colonies, in the Old South and the Southwest.

TABLE 1

Nationality Composition of Population of the United States, 1790

Region and State	Total Population Number	White							Nonwhite Per Cent of Total
		Per Cent of Total by Nationality							
		English	Scotch	Irish	German	Dutch	French	Other	
NEW ENGLAND:	*1,009,206*	93.5	3.5	0.9	*	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.7
Maine	96,643	92.6	4.3	1.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3	.6
New Hampshire	141,899	93.5	4.7	0.9	*	0.1	0.1	0.1	.6
Vermont	85,341	95.1	3.0	0.7	*	0.5	0.2	0.2	.3
Massachusetts	378,556	93.7	3.5	1.0	*	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.4
Rhode Island	69,112	89.8	2.9	0.7	0.1	*	0.1	*	6.4
Connecticut	237,655	94.0	2.7	0.7	*	0.1	0.2	*	2.3
MIDDLE STATES:	*1,017,087*	62.4	7.5	2.5	12.5	7.4	0.8	0.7	6.2
New York	340,241	72.3	3.0	0.7	0.3	14.9	0.7	0.5	7.6
New Jersey	184,139	53.6	7.1	6.6	8.5	11.7	1.9	2.9†	7.7
Pennsylvania	433,611	57.6	11.4	2.0	25.5	0.6	0.5	*	2.4
Delaware	59,096	67.6	5.9	3.1	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.3	21.6
SOUTHERN STATES:	*1,903,332*	54.0	5.8	1.4	2.6	0.1	0.4	0.1	35.6
Maryland	319,728	54.8	4.2	1.6	3.8	0.1	0.5	0.3	34.7
Virginia	747,610	50.3	4.2	1.2	2.9	0.1	0.3	0.1	40.9
North Carolina	395,005	60.8	8.2	1.7	2.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	26.8
South Carolina	249,073	46.4	6.6	1.4	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.1	43.7
Georgia	82,548	53.2	7.2	1.5	1.8	0.1	0.2	0.1	35.9
Kentucky	73,677	69.0	9.3	1.9	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	17.0
Tennessee	35,691	74.3	10.0	2.0	2.5	0.2	0.3	0.1	10.6
UNITED STATES	3,929,625	66.3	5.6	1.6	4.5	2.0	0.4	0.3	19.3

* Less than 0.05 per cent.

† Hebrews constituted most of "others" in New Jersey.

Source: Bureau of the Census. *A Century of Population Growth, 1790–1920.* Pp. 116, 121, and 222.

Each early nationality group also contributed its types of farm structures, of food or cooking, and of dress. It is only in cultural islands and among a few religious sects that old modes or styles of dress have not given way to the numerous changes in fashion. But there are many types of cooking that still prevail. And Dutch colonial, English colonial, and even

French colonial houses are still distinct types of architecture in the United States. The Pennsylvania-German barn is still prevalent in Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley, and both the early plantation and Spanish types of houses can still be seen in and beyond the area of their origin. Moreover, the early Cayuga type of wagon is still used in Pennsylvania, and a singletree is still called a whiffletree in most parts of New England. There are countless other articles and traits that were carried from the early colonial areas to other parts of the United States, but the diverse changes that took place in the hundred years following the end of the colonial period were so rapid and dynamic that they did much to make rural life different from what the mother countries had planted and planned in early colonial days. And yet elements of these traits can still be found in areas of the country in which people from early colonies settled during colonial expansion days.

Early landownership and community patterns did not completely disappear in the process of colonial expansion, and they have not completely disappeared today. The New England form of town (township) government is a persistent carry-over from the early village-centered rural communities; some large estates still exist in the area of Dutchess County, New York, as a carry-over from the old Dutch patroon system of landholdings; and there are still many plantations in the South. In addition, the French line villages and the Spanish-American cluster villages still prevail in the areas first occupied by French and Spanish colonists. Certain Indian tribes today live very much as they did 150 years ago. Even the present, almost universal, pattern of scattered farms was the original pattern of settlement in William Penn's early colonies, establishing itself outside the villages in the Northern colonies and in the midst of the plantation economy in the Southern colonies.

The Influence of the Frontier on American Rural Life

Within the first hundred years after the establishment of the Federal government, a whole nation was created and a continent of hitherto unheard-of natural agricultural resources was opened to and occupied by land-hungry people. Railroads, factories, and great cities were built, and the products of the newly developed regions were carried to the markets of the world. Millions of people left the countries of northern Europe to come to the United States, and members of thousands of families who had lived along the Atlantic seaboard for two to seven generations pulled up, root and branch, and moved west. And during each succeeding generation, the westward movement of population penetrated several hundred miles deeper into the interior, going both west and southwest.

Statistics cannot adequately depict the breaking up of old communities and the establishing of new ones. They cannot portray the ferment, excitement, and unbridled expectation that prevailed, or the practical experiences of expansion, exploitation, and speculation that lasted for enough generations to leave their stamp on our society long after frontier days were past. For frontier opportunities were not only sufficiently great to accommodate all

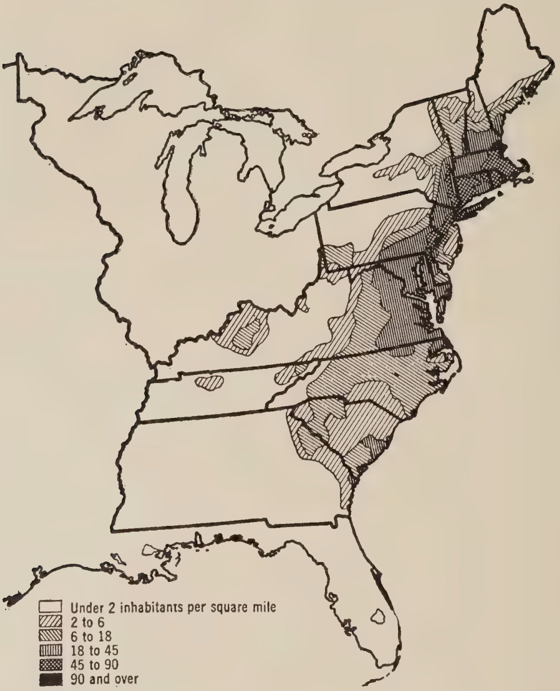

Under 2 inhabitants per square mile
2 to 6
6 to 18
18 to 45
45 to 90
90 and over

Fig. 1a DENSITY OF POPULATION, 1790

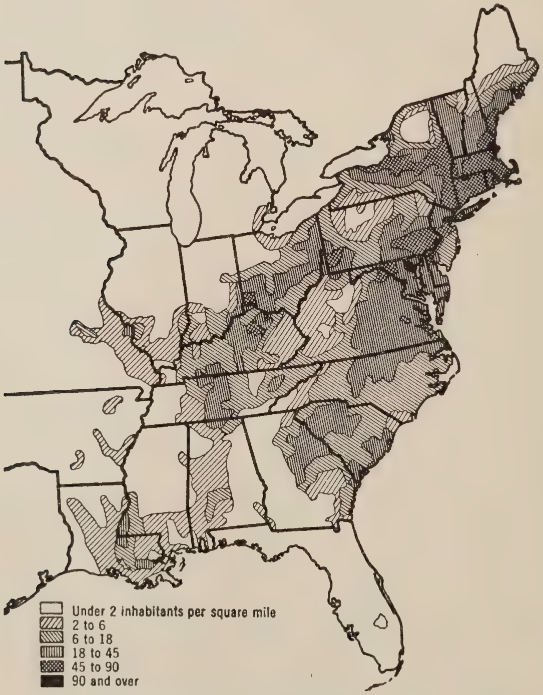

Under 2 inhabitants per square mile
2 to 6
6 to 18
18 to 45
45 to 90
90 and over

Fig. 1b DENSITY OF POPULATION, 1820

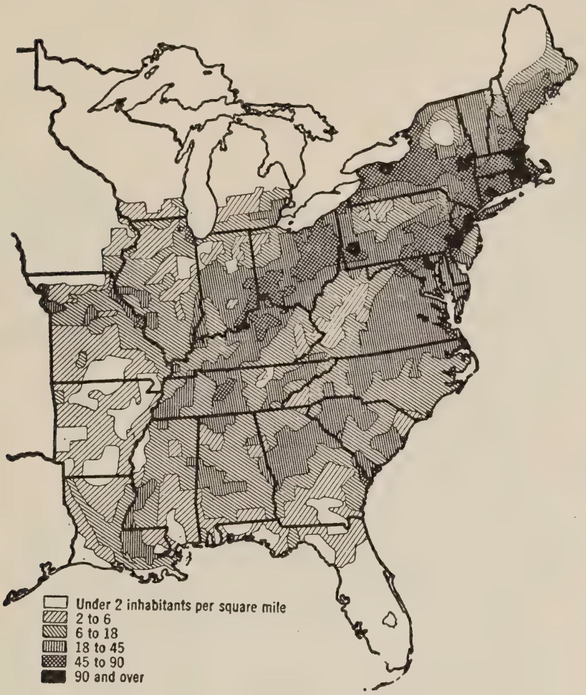
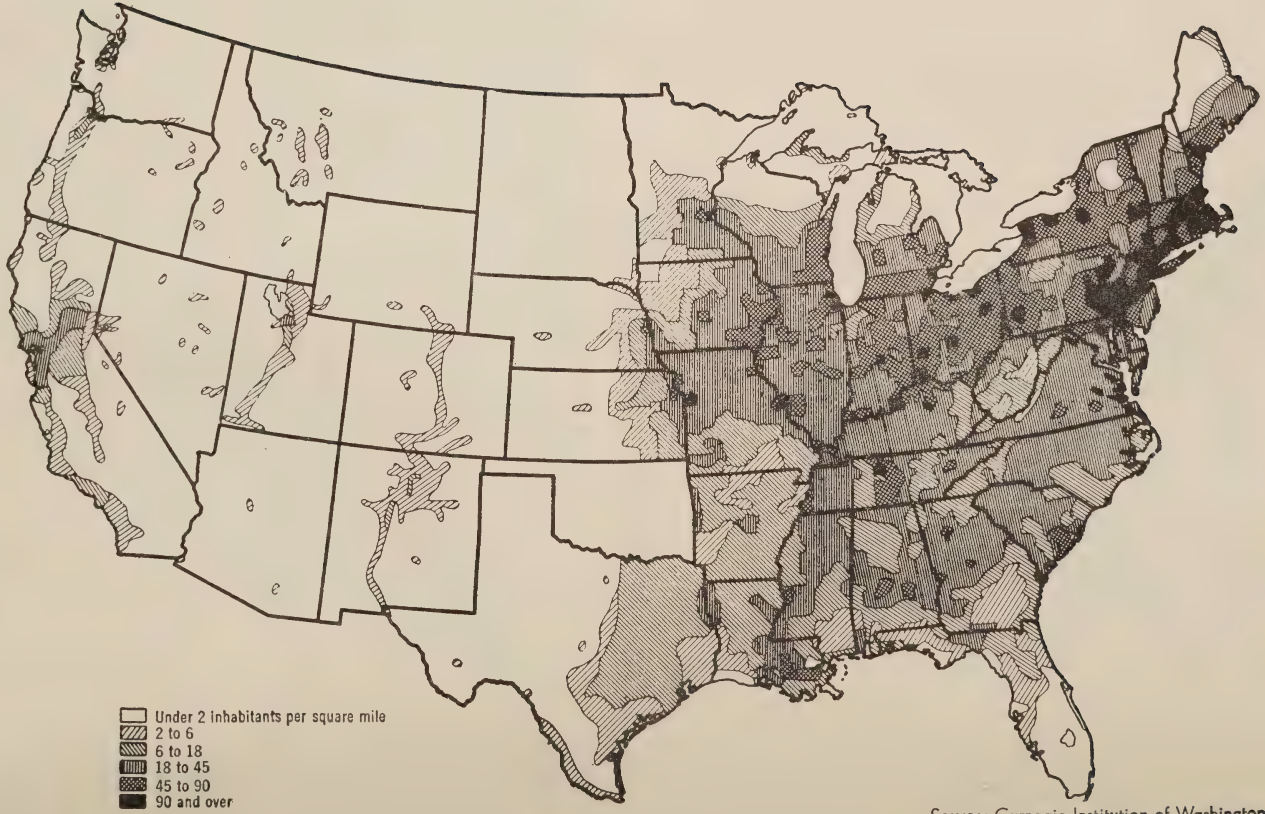


Fig. 1c DENSITY OF POPULATION, 1840

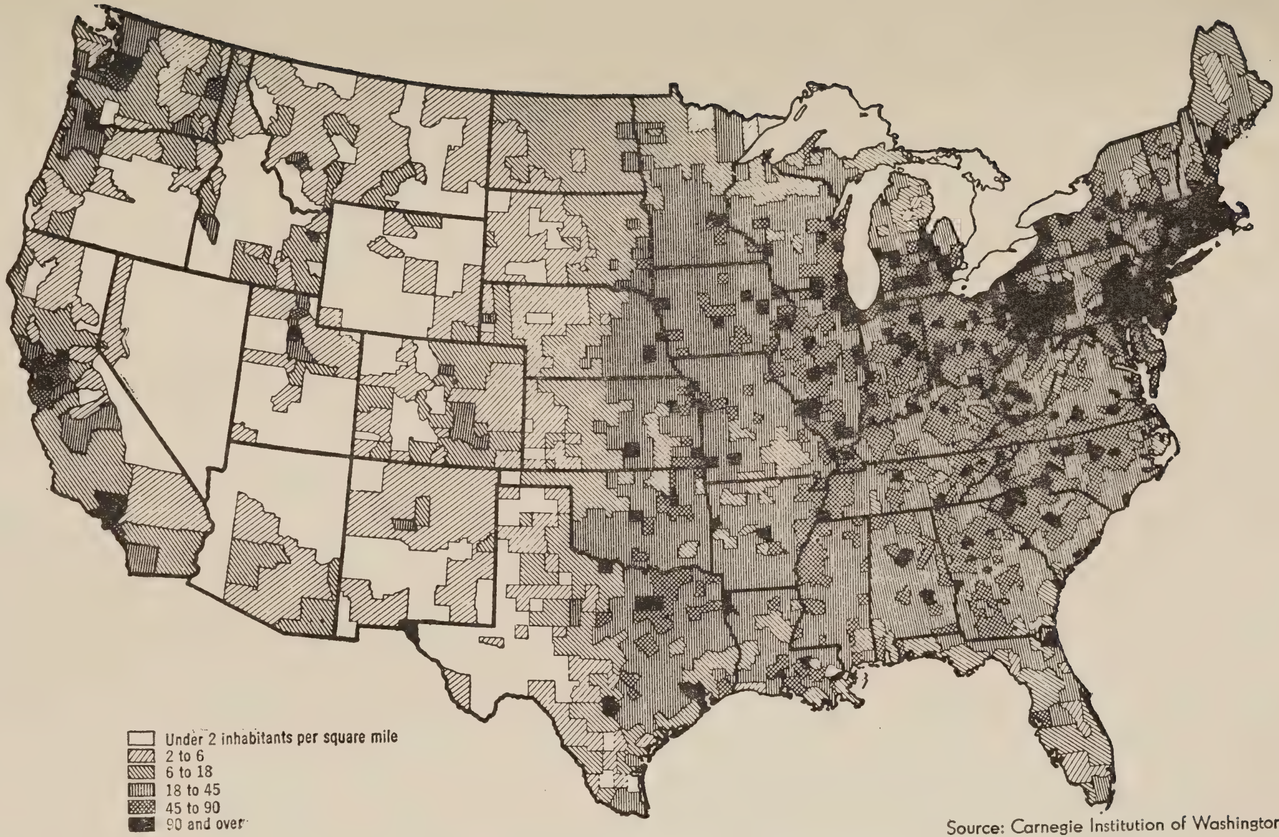
foreign newcomers and all the natural increase of population among old-established families, but were also alluring enough to uproot old-established settlers. Furthermore, for a number of decades each new frontier was more attractive than those previously occupied. Thus resettlement became the habit and almost the tradition with many family groups. Some moved many times, and most families took it for granted that in each generation some of of their members would go west. A person reared under the highly stable conditions of old countries rarely appreciates the ideas and faiths of a society that has so recently passed through 150 years of such experience. Equally important is the fact that few Americans realize how different American rural life is from the old custom-bound peasant societies of most of the rest of the world.

The chief source of early settlers for newly occupied lands were the settled colonial areas. Relatively few foreign immigrants were in the westward movement until after 1840. Early colonial settlements therefore left fairly distinct cultural stamps on the new areas, and it is important to know which areas these were. Between 1790 and 1800 they consisted of western New York and Pennsylvania, eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, and southern Ohio. By 1820 more than half of Tennessee was settled, and the people moved up from the South along the Mississippi River as far as St. Louis. By then, too, three fourths of Ohio was occupied, and population had flowed on into southern Indiana and Illinois. The New Orleans settlement had blanketed western Alabama with a thick layer of population that spread as far north as Arkansas.


Under 2 inhabitants per square mile
2 to 6
6 to 18
18 to 45
45 to 90
90 and over

Source: Carnegie Institution of Washington

Fig. 2a DENSITY OF POPULATION, 1870


Under 2 inhabitants per square mile
2 to 6
6 to 18
18 to 45
45 to 90
90 and over

Source: Carnegie Institution of Washington

Fig. 2b DENSITY OF POPULATION, 1920

Between 1820 and 1840 the population of the nation almost doubled, but the area of settlement was not greatly expanded. By then all earlier settled states were well occupied, and the advance guard of settlement had moved into southern Michigan and Wisconsin and into eastern Iowa. Foreign immigrants were furnishing an increasing number of the new settlers, but they were not yet a dominant element among the people who were traveling westward. It was later that foreigners came to the frontier areas. Therefore they did not help lay the foundation of settlement and culture in these areas.

During the thirty years after 1840 the westward movement of population rose to such a crescendo and the amount of new land settled was so stupendous that this short period was an epoch, not only in our history, but in the history of the world. The total population of the nation more than doubled, growing from 17,069,000 to 38,558,000, while the area of effective settlement moved about 200 miles westward, jumped the arid plains, and began to spread along the Pacific coast. The people who moved into these new areas came chiefly from states that had been occupied in the early days of the westward movement, but great numbers also came from foreign countries. The population was thus a composite. And as Frederick Jackson Turner said, "The early society of the Middle West was not a complex, highly differentiated and organized society. Almost every family was a self-sufficing unit, and liberty and equality flourished in the frontier periods of the Middle West as perhaps never before in history. . . . Both native settler and European immigrant saw in this free and competitive movement of the frontier the chance to break the bondage of social rank, and rise to a higher plane of existence." While America's democracy and America's faith in the common man were not born during this thirty-year period, they proved themselves then as they had never done before, and they rooted themselves so deeply that they became creeds in that section of the country.

The movement into new areas of the South was considerably different from that into the Middle West. For the frontier line of settlement did not advance as many miles westward and the area of new land settlement was not so great. Moreover, only about half as many people were involved in this movement, and very few of them were foreign immigrants. It was during this period that the Civil War took place, and in the last few years of the period the South was in the throes of depression and readjustment. The people who were moving into the Middle South were not the same as those moving into other areas, and the spirit that prevailed there in 1870 was quite different from the exuberance which prevailed in the expanding and prosperous Middle West.

There were three distinct streams of migration into the Middle West and two into the Middle South. Each posited a type of people that has ever since greatly influenced the culture of the areas into which they flowed. Most pronounced of all in the northern sections of the Middle West were the foreign immigrants; in the South it was the Negroes. Thus most of the 1,500,000 German immigrants who came to the United States between 1830 and 1860 settled in the Middle West, the majority of them in areas already partially occupied. These were Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois. and Missouri; but large numbers also went into the newer territories, especially Wisconsin. For the most part they were educated, thrifty, conservative, hard-working farmers who had left their mother country in order to seek political freedom and economic opportunity, and they probably contributed more than any other group to the development of a stable agriculture in the new areas.

The second stream of population into the Middle West came from the South — chiefly from Kentucky and Tennessee, and also from western Virginia and North Carolina. Many, if not most, of the parents or grandparents of these migrants had gone from Pennsylvania into the upland areas of the South after the Revolutionary War. They were not, therefore, a part of the old plantation South. They had begun moving into Southern Ohio as early as 1810, and they went on into southern Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri between 1810 and 1830. Most of them were middle class or small, nonslave-owning farmers. Like the German immigrants and those who traveled west from the Northern states, they too wanted to become owners of family-sized farms.

The third and most ample stream of new settlers came from the states east of the new settlement areas. This tide of migration flowed in a crescent-shaped stream south and west along the Great Lakes. Its primary sources were as far east as New York, New Jersey, and New England, and its tributaries were in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, while the delta of this great stream was primarily Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. By the end of the period, it included eastern Kansas and Nebraska as well. In fact, in 1870 well over 50 per cent of all persons living in these five states had been born in other states, and the majority of them in other Northern states. They were, for the most part, people of English, Scotch, Irish, and German stock, and together with those from the South and the newly arrived immigrants they constituted the most cosmopolitan group of pioneers ever to occupy a large area of new settlement.

The two southern streams that flowed west were not so clearly marked, since they fused at many points. The major one flowed west from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi into Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas. The other flowed southwest from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee into Arkansas and Texas. There was also a minor stream that flowed into Texas from the Middle West. The stream coming out of the Old South carried both small farmers and cotton planters, and, of course, Negroes. The one from the North and East carried about the same type of people as flowed into the Middle West, including many German immigrants.

Type-farming Regions Evolve

As is the case in every frontier area of the world, the pioneers of America practiced two types of agriculture. First, they attempted to be completely self-sufficient and therefore to produce all the food and fiber essential to their daily and annual needs. Second, they attempted to continue the types of farming to which they had been accustomed in their previous locations.

Moreover, as they moved farther west, beyond timbered country, hunting and fishing furnished less and less of their food and clothing supply, and there were fewer indigenous materials with which to build shelters. Thus from the time of earliest settlement pioneer agriculture was diversified farming, except in the tobacco and cotton areas where cash-crop farming established itself. But even in those areas there were always more diversified than plantation farmers. In one area after another, however, farmers gradually shifted to the more feasible and profitable types of production, and so established large major type-farming areas, which in due time became something approaching large cultural regions.

Tobacco was the first American cash crop and it is still produced in the areas of the South where its early producers were specialized farmers and where great tobacco-producing slave plantations were founded. When the cotton gin was invented, however, cotton became the great plantation crop and the production of cotton spread rapidly across the South. The cotton belt was therefore the first great type-farming belt to be established in the United States, and because of its early settlement it today carries over a larger volume of early cultural residues than does any other farm region of the country. For the economic and social arrangements — cash crops, commercial credits, and a relatively fixed class structure — were established in colonial days, expanded with expanding settlement, and are today a part of the cultural organization of the cotton belt.

The first commercial farm crop in the North was wheat, but with expanding settlement the wheat belt shifted steadily west, moving from New England to the Middle West and then to the Great Plains. The present wheat belt is fitted in between the cotton, corn, and dairy belts on the east (all of which can, and do, produce some wheat) and the range-livestock areas on the west (which can produce little except grass and livestock). The production of wheat in specialized areas is due, not to early-established social and economic arrangements, but largely to the fact that these areas are disadvantaged in the production of other crops, and to the fact that the areas farther east, where the wheat belt was once located, find it more profitable to produce other products.

Corn also is produced very widely, but it became highly concentrated in the Middle West almost as soon as that area was occupied by white settlers. Not only did it find optimum ecological conditions in the upper part of the great Mississippi Valley, but also, because corn was an exceedingly fine feed for fattening cattle and hogs, the corn belt became the greatest livestock area of the country. It was settled by a great diversity of people from other parts of the United States and from northern Europe. And because of these factors it quickly became and remains a rural culture of family-sized commercial farms.

Range-livestock farming came to be located in the areas where it prevails today partly because it was pushed out of other areas by crop farming and partly because the cattle culture came into this country from Mexico through Texas and New Mexico. The great increase in national population, the development of industry in the East, and foreign trade created heavy demands for cattle products, so that for three decades the Western ranges of the United States were the cattle kingdom of the world. Thus, grass lands, which for centuries had furnished grazing for immense herds of buffalo and deer and which had been the hunting-grounds for a relatively few Indians, became the source of meat for millions of Americans and Europeans. The story of the development of the cattle kingdom is one of the most romantic, if not fantastic, of all American pioneer stories. But the old romantic cattle kingdom is gone and today the range-livestock areas have an established economy and a culture that merely combines some of the romance of the Old West with the patterns of a settled agriculture.

The dairy belt and the Western specialty-crop areas were developed after the pioneering era had passed, while the general and self-sufficing areas contain the people who have been described as "our contemporary ancestors," because their types of farm production and modes of life are still similar to those of the pioneers in all early North American settlements.

In Part IV of this book a chapter is given to the discussion of each of these great type-farming belts or areas.

The peak of the westward movement had come to an end between a hundred and a hundred and twenty years from the time the expansion began after the Revolutionary War.[1] Between 1910 and 1940 the population of the states west of the boundaries formed by Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, the Dakotas, and Montana increased, but relatively less than in other areas. The areas of the extensive wheat belt, of the range-livestock belt, and the specialty-crop section of the West Coast were well established before World War I. In fact, in some places the limits of agricultural expansion had been reached by 1890, and population was withdrawing from many of the areas of low and uncertain rainfall which had been settled too hastily during the westward expansion. There were no good homestead lands available after 1900, and while irrigation made new land available, such land was not cheap. Furthermore, industrial development, which had progressed rapidly and steadily after the Civil War, was stimulated by a different type of population movement, that is, by a movement from farms to towns and cities rather than from east to west.

After 1890 homesteaders found that the lands available for entry were not equal to the rich prairie lands of Iowa; that they had moved west beyond the twenty-inch rainfall; and that they were attempting to practice crop farming in areas that were suited only to grass and livestock farming. Already the pioneers were beginning to move out of these areas, going farther west or returning east to areas of more abundant rainfall. The departures started in the latter part of the 1880's and are sharply reflected in the census reports of the next decade. For instance in 1900 there were twenty-six counties in western Nebraska and Kansas and in eastern Colorado that had less than one half the population they had had in 1890. In short, the westward movement, in its one hundred years of enthusiastic expansion to new frontiers, had overreached the margins of safe farming, had floundered, and had turned back on itself. It is now clear that much of the area opened to homesteading after

---

[1] See frontier population maps of 1870 and 1920 (Figs. 2a and 2b).

1880, and especially after 1890, should never have been offered for settlement. More important, however, were the attitudes that had developed during the long pioneering period. Progress in the agricultural development had been made by continuous expansion into new land areas and by the exploitation of hitherto untapped natural resources. At the same time individual success had to a considerable extent been accomplished by speculation, that is, by taking chances on the unknown. All three — expansion, exploitation, and speculation — had worked so successfully for so many generations that they literally became creeds of traditions.

As population flowed westward, the Northeastern areas, which had been settled early, lost ground in agriculture as their production competed with that of the Western farm areas. But they gained in industrial production because of the agricultural development in the West and because of the great growth of European markets. Thus factories were built, and cities increased in size and number. In fact, of the 226 cities that in 1870 had populations of 8,000 or more, 106 were in the New England and the Middle Atlantic States. And the number of people living in these cities increased almost sixfold between 1840 and 1870. In short, these areas became as definitely specialized in industry as the West and South did in agriculture.

Later chapters will describe and analyze the composition of the present farm population, but the story of this chapter would not be complete without a brief account of the nationality groups that were involved in the population expansion of the country between the end of the colonial period and the end of the pioneering period. It is difficult, however, to select the census data that furnish the best information, for many immigrants who had come to the country between 1850 and 1870 had died before the end of the pioneering period. Furthermore, the census identifies nationality only by stating that people are "foreign-born" or "children of foreign parentage," and it is therefore impossible either to locate geographically or to know the number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren of immigrants. The 1920 census has been selected for this analysis, because most immigrants who entered the country as early as 1900 were still living at the time the report was compiled, because immigration was very great between 1900 and 1914, and because immigration was sharply restricted by law after 1924. In 1920, therefore, the number of foreign-born and their descendants who could be clearly identified and geographically located was nearly at a maximum.

It is estimated that fully one half of the people in the United States in 1920 were descendants of persons who were in the country in 1790. And if they are divided according to whether they were urban or farm residents, approximately 16,000,000 of them were on farms. Altogether, there were 1,471,000 foreign-born whites and 3,797,000 others, one or both of whose parents were foreign-born whites. There were also slightly less than 6,000,000 nonwhites. The remaining 4,000,000 were descendants of early foreign immigrants.

Fifteen national groups constituted more than 90 per cent of all foreign-born whites in the farm population at that time. These same groups also furnished more than 90 per cent of all foreign-born farm operators. Some other nationality groups had contributed far greater numbers to the city population than to that of the farms, but those listed in Table 2 will serve to describe quite accurately the nationality composition of the farm population. Those groups of which 25 or more per cent had settled on farms were the Norwegians, the Danes, the Dutch, the Swiss, and the Finns. But there were other nationality groups — notably the Germans, Swedes, and Canadians — that had larger numbers living on farms.

TABLE 2

Number of Foreign-born Farm Population and Foreign-born Farm Operators, 1920

Nation	Number in Farm Population	Farm Operators Number
Germany	356,114	140,667
Sweden	153,064	60,461
Norway	130,629	51,599
Canada	123,209	48,668
Russia	81,994	32,388
Austria	76,384	30,172
England	67,376	26,614
Denmark	64,721	25,565
Italy	46,245	18,267
Poland	43,929	17,352
Ireland	41,929	16,562
Holland	39,465	15,589
Finland	37,944	14,988
Switzerland	33,040	13,051
Mexico	30,739	12,142

In 1920 the foreign-born altogether composed 4.7 per cent of the total farm population. And if the children of foreign-born parents are added, the percentage was 16.8. It is important to know in which states these foreign nationalty groups constituted the greatest number and the highest percentage of the farm population.

There were more than 1,000 foreign-born German farm operators in each of twenty-three states, and more than 5,000 in each of ten states with the greatest number being distributed as follows: Wisconsin (18,032), Minnesota (14,731), Iowa (12,730), Michigan (9,746), Illinois (9,725), Nebraska (9,505), and Texas (7,384). Approximately 60 per cent of all the Swedish farm operators were in eight states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, North Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Washington, and Michigan. The Norwegians were concentrated heavily in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. More than 75 per cent of all the Canadians were in states that border on Canada, and between one third and one half of them were in Michigan. Approximately 80 per cent of all the Russians were in twelve North Central, Mountain, and Pacific states, with more than one fourth of them being settled in North Dakota. The only others of the fifteen nationality groups that were represented by more than 30,000 in the farm population and by more than 12,000 farm operators and that were highly concentrated geographically were the Mexicans and the Finns. Well over 80 per cent of the Mexican farm operators

TABLE 3

Number of Foreign-born Farm Operators and Foreign-born Farm Population by States, 1920

State	Foreign-born Farm Operators	Foreign-born in Farm Population
Minnesota	67,305	155,846
Wisconsin	53,998	129,728
Michigan	48,264	112,358
North Dakota	36,248	82,859
California	34,189	94,910
New York	25,776	71,276
Nebraska	24,592	56,084
South Dakota	20,325	47,221
Washington	19,757	44,064
Montana	15,563	33,642
Massachusetts	8,930	22,246
Connecticut	7,625	19,365
Rhode Island	940	2,173

were in Texas, and approximately 76 per cent of the Finnish farm operators were in Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Washington, with more than 65 per cent of them being concentrated in the three Lake states.

If the presence of foreign-born is looked at in terms of state populations, adding together all nationality groups, it is easy to see which farming areas of the nation were affected most by the great tide of immigrants that flowed into the United States during the period of expansion. And it is this picture that is given by the data presented in Table 3 on foreign-born farm operators and the foreign-born in the farm population as a whole.

In some states that had more than 100,000 foreign-born farm people, so many nationalities are represented that no group constitutes what can be described as a cultural island. In some states that had considerably smaller numbers, some one foreign group constitutes a quite pronounced cultural

TABLE 4

Leading Nationality Groups in States with Large Numbers of Foreign-born Farm Operators

State	Per Cent Foreign-born Farm Operators	Nationality Groups Constituting 50 Per Cent of All Foreign-born Operators
North Dakota	47	Norwegian, Russian, German, Swedish
Minnesota	36	German, Swedish, Norwegian
Connecticut	35	German, Russian, Irish, Polish, Italian
Washington	30	German, Norwegian, Canadian, Finnish, Russian
California	30	Italian, German, Portuguese, Canadian, others *
Wisconsin	29	German, Norwegian, Swedish
Massachusetts	29	Canadian, Irish, English
Montana	27	Norwegian, Canadian, German, Swedish, Russian
South Dakota	27	German, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish
Michigan	24	Canadian, German, Dutch, Swedish
Rhode Island	23	Canadian, Italian, others *
Nebraska	20	German, Swedish, Danish, Austrian, Russian

* The others were chiefly Orientals.

island. There are the German and Swiss Mennonites in central Pennsylvania; the French Canadians in northern Maine; Italian groups in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts; Mexicans in New Mexico and Arizona; large Danish groups in half a dozen Midwestern states; some large Polish groups in southern New England and the Lake states; and Dutch groups in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The nationality composition of the foreign-born farm operators in the twelve states in which 20 per cent or more of these operators were foreign-born is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 5

Per Cent of Farm Population, Foreign-born White, of Foreign or Mixed Parentage, Nonwhite, and Native White (by Geographic Regions, 1920)

States	Foreign and Mixed			Nonwhite	Native White Native Parentage
	Foreign-born White	Foreign-born or Mixed Parentage	Total		
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
United States	4.7	12.1	16.8	16.8	66.4
New England	12.4	20.5	32.9	0.3	66.7
Middle Atlantic	6.7	14.8	21.5	0.8	77.6
East North Central	7.1	21.9	29.0	0.5	70.4
West North Central	9.3	28.6	37.9	0.9	61.1
South Atlantic	0.3	0.6	0.9	36.6	62.5
East South Central	0.2	0.6	0.8	29.2	70.0
West South Central	2.7	5.2	7.9	23.6	68.6
Mountain	9.4	20.2	29.6	4.6	65.7
Pacific	15.8	24.6	40.4	5.6	53.9

Because of the very wide differences that exist in the distribution of the foreign-born among the broad regions of the country, an additional table (Table 5) is presented for the nine census divisions of the nation. This table also presents information on the distribution of the children of foreign-born whites and of the colored farm population.

As may be seen in Table 5, the number of children of foreign-born parents was only slightly less than three times the number of the foreign-born whites. About one third of these children had one American-born parent; both parents of all others were foreign-born. But both parents were not always from the same nationality group. And because of this fact it is not possible, from the data available, to determine accurately the percentage of so-called German, Norwegian, or Polish "blood" represented in the various areas of the country. The data presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5 do make it possible, however, to know to which geographic division and to which states various nationality groups have contributed greatest numbers to the farm populations. Thus, insofar as these nationality groups were carriers of cultural traits, or for one reason or another induced unique social and cultural adjustments and adaptations, it is possible to know the areas where one or another of these cultural facts is socially significant.

The broadest significant generalization concerning immigrants is that the vast majority of them came from northern Europe. This fact does much to help explain the cultural differences between the United States and all so-called Latin-American countries. For practically everywhere in Latin America landholdings were very early institutionalized in latifundia (large holdings), whereas in the United States large holdings, except in the plantation areas, failed to survive. This can be partially accounted for by the existence in the early United States of a vast frontier of rich and almost free lands, but it is also partially accounted for by the differences between the peoples of northern and southern Europe with respect to class structure and political and religious ideologies. In any case, plentiful good land, the Homestead and Pre-emption acts, and the simultaneous development of industrial opportunities in the United States developed a free and mobile rural people among whom it was difficult to develop sharp class distinctions, whereas in most of South America large landholders became the elite and today are still a quite separate social class from those who till the soil.

The second most significant cultural fact, as Table 5 indicates, is the presence of a great number of Negroes in some areas and of very few in others. In 1920 Negroes constituted from 22 to 36 per cent of the farm population in the Southern geographic divisions. The cultural significance of this fact is not so much that Negroes are carriers of peculiar cultural nationality traits as it is that they were slaves for generations. And this, together with their obvious physical differences, has led to a type of class structure that does not exist in any other area of the country. As an institution, the plantation depended on slavery for its survival in competition with rich, cheap frontier lands; it continues on the basis of a class structure that exists nowhere except where Negroes are present in substantial numbers. Furthermore, in all areas where Negroes constitute a substantial proportion of the population, there is a dual set of social institutions, and in all rural areas there are two systems of neighborhood and community organization. These situations do not exist, or at least are not pronounced, in the areas in which one or more European immigrant groups constitute a large proportion of the farm population.

Even in the areas in which one foreign nationality group constitutes a majority of the farm people and group cohesion is buttressed by religious ideologies, foreign nationality traits have in only a few instances built cultural islands or induced markedly unique social structures. For economic opportunities and practices, farm mechanization and science, and the adherence to types of farming best adapted to given areas have been utilized by all farmers of whatever national origin, and have contributed as much or more than anything else to the effective working of the melting pot in the rural areas where there are great numbers of foreign-born.

The truth is that few foreign immigrants went into the extreme geographic frontiers. Rather, they settled in the middle borders among native-born farmers, from whom they quickly learned methods and techniques of farming and marketing, and with whose children their children attended school, played, and intermarried. So that undoubtedly far more startling than any unique contributions made to farming by any foreign nationality group is the fact that peasant farmers, coming from all over northern Europe, began immediately to use large farm machines, to practice commercial production, to participate in the habits of personal mobility, and to buy and sell farms, none of which fit their long traditions of peasant life.

From what has been said, it should be clear that it is not easy to identify clearly the unique influences of the various foreign nationality groups in the areas where the data in Tables 3, 4, and 5 show them to be in greatest numbers. For some nationality groups have stuck to farming more tenaciously than others; some have tended to go more into one type of farming; and some have been leaders in co-operative movements, whereas some have probably tended to practice old-world traits to an extent sufficient to mark them locally as a somewhat separate group. A higher percentage of Norwegians than of any other immigrant group settled on farms. Next in order were the Danes, Dutch, Finns, Swiss, Swedes, and Germans. In 1920 a higher percentage of Finns than of any other group were farm owners. They were followed by Canadians, Poles, Norwegians, Irish, Welsh, and Germans. A higher percentage of Mexicans were tenants; then came the Greeks, Dutch, Portuguese, Italians, and Russians. Then, too, farmers in most foreign-born nationality groups owned larger and more valuable farms than was average. And in terms of average value of farms, the highest ranking groups were, in order, the Danes, Scotch, Germans, Irish, Russians, and Norwegians. Because they have larger families, and probably also because they retain some of their peasant practices, the families of foreign-born farmers provide a much higher proportion of their own farm labor.

All of the above are broad and measurable differences, but not all may be entirely due to nationality traits. Indeed, some of them are undoubtedly due to the period in which one or another immigrant group came to the United States. For those who have been here longest have had more time to accomplish farm ownership, to build good houses and farm buildings, and to expand their holdings. On the other hand, those who came late had to go into poorer land areas or pay increased prices for improved farms in the better land areas. There is considerable evidence, however, that both relatively recent arrivals and those who have stuck to their farms are gradually replacing old-line Americans on the land, and not only because their families provide a larger portion of their own labor, but also because they spend less for education, recreation, and luxuries.

In any event, there are certainly areas in which a visitor would have no difficulty in recognizing the prevalence and influence of particular foreign nationality groups. There are, for instance, the German settlements just north of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; the Norwegians in Hennepin County, Minnesota; the Swedes in Burnett County, Wisconsin; the Norwegians in the Red River Valley of North Dakota; the Russian and German settlements in south and central North Dakota; the Finnish settlements in northern Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan; the French Canadians in Aroostook County, Maine; and the Poles in the lower Connecticut Valley. The only other areas with equal influences of a foreign population are those along the Mexican border. But there are other areas in which nationality groups form actual small cultural islands, and there are also many areas in which foreign-born do not form a large enough proportion of the population to exert much influence on the customs and culture.

Patterns of Settlement

One of the unique results of the evolution of American agriculture is the new patterns of settlement that were established in nearly all areas of the United States. Village or town settlements were early established in southern New England and in parts of New York and the Middle colonies, while the plantation settlements of the South became fixed in early colonial days. In typical European, Asiatic, or South American Indian village settlements, the residences are grouped together and the farm lands often have no dwellings on them. But this type of settlement is found in the United States only among the Mormons, the Spanish-Americans, and, in modified form, among the French people in Louisiana. And in all of these cases it is either a carry-over from other cultures or was planned and is maintained by cohesive religious organizations. Early English colonists naturally established the English village pattern of settlement in both Virginia and New England. Those in Virginia, however, were quickly transformed into plantations in the tobacco-producing areas and into isolated farmsteads in the interior. Those in New England moved westward with expanding settlement but became dispersed as squatters moved beyond the frontier where land was sold or granted in large blocks. The influence of patterns of settlement on farm life will be touched on at many points in later chapters. It is enough here to identify them as heritages of the original settlement of the country and to name a few of the present-day factors that tend to perpetuate or disintegrate them.

Patterns of settlement are perpetuated by tradition, and they are disintegrated or modified by modern means of transportation and communication and by the necessities of efficient farm management. The dominant patterns of land settlement in the United States are to a large extent determined by the types of farming, and in most cases different patterns are only different modifications of the basic pattern of dispersed settlement. For each family lives on the farm it operates, and the residence is placed in its best relations to topography, farm operations, and roads, rather than in relation to neighboring farmsteads. If the topography is even and the roads are straight and evenly spaced, something approaching a checkerboard pattern of settlement prevails. The distances between residences depend altogether on the sizes of the farms. In the corn belt, where the 160-acre farm prevails, the average distance between houses is a half mile; in the large wheat-farm areas it is a mile; and in intensive-farming areas it may be less than a quarter of a mile. In this last case, residences are so near each other that they almost constitute line villages. But this is not because of an ideological village pattern. It is purely a result of the size of farms, which is in turn due to the type of farming that prevails.

In many areas of the country the topography is broken, the quality of the land is not even, and the roads are not in a symmetrical pattern, with the result that farm residences, even though located on these roads and on individual farms, do not form either a checkerboard or a line-settlement pattern. Nevertheless, the general pattern of settlement in such cases is still that of dispersed or scattered farmsteads. In some parts of the cotton belt the dispersed farmstead pattern is further modified by the presence of large plantations, which are interspersed among small or medium-sized farmsteads. And in the corn belt hard-surfaced roads, telephones, and electric lines are tending to pull farm residences toward arteries of transportation, but at the same time these facilities are lessening the isolation of farm residences and are thus fortifying the patterns of dispersed settlement.[2]

In the cotton belt, as we have said, the same general pattern of settlement prevails but is modified in many places by the presence of large multiple-unit farms whereby farm residences may be clustered near the plantation headquarters. Indeed, the plantation, which was one of the earliest forms of land occupancy, has also been one of the most persistent. Moreover, during slave days, as well as both before and afterward, it was a type of community organization too. As a matter of fact, it has been the nearest thing to a collective farm ever to exist in this country. For the plantation headquarters, with its commissary, gin, mule barn, blacksmith shop, big plantation house, and many cabins, formed a sort of village center. And this type of settlement still exists. It is sometimes modified by having the residences of sharecroppers or hired laborers located away from headquarters, and not all plantations have as elaborate headquarters or as central a settlement as just described. No pattern of settlement, however, is more an index to the type of farming that is practiced and to the type of farm operation and management that prevails than is that of the cotton, tobacco, and sugar-cane plantations. And thus, these plantations, which are a pattern of settlement that was established in the early history of this country, still exist.[3]

There are two small areas in the United States in which the cluster-village type of settlement exists, and one area in which the line-village type of settlement may be found. The Spanish-American villages, which are of the former type, were, so to speak, transplanted directly from Mexico. They are located along streams where small irrigated lots of a few acres furnish them subsistence. The people are predominantly Catholic, and thus constitute a church congregation. The persistence of these villages is not, however, guaranteed by these facts. Some of the villagers not only could, but do leave the villages and filter out into other ways of life. Yet each village is almost a society within itself, and once a villager has left the village he feels that he has pulled up the roots of his social status. In short, the Spanish-American villages are held intact partly because the Spanish-Americans are a minority

[2] Plate 1 presents an air view of this pattern of settlement.

[3] Plate 2 is an example of a type of plantation.

group and partly because of their traditional values of communal settlement. For each is a cultural island.

The Mormon village, which is also of the cluster type, is the product of a conceptual ideal. For it is built on the specifications for the "City of Zion," with an adaptation to physical environment. The conceptual plan was formulated as early as 1833; the adaptation to irrigation farming came when the Mormons moved into the semiarid areas near Great Salt Lake. They lived in groups partly as protection against the Indians, but primarily because they were a cohesive and co-operative religious society. And their immediate and heroic development of irrigation furthered their bent to co-operation, while their irrigated farms were small and their homes naturally were near one another. The "City of Zion" pattern for the village structure consisted of a quadrangle one mile square, to be divided into ten-acre blocks, each of which was to be in turn divided into half-acre lots. This would provide for almost a thousand families, the church and school grounds, parks, and streets. While few Mormon villages completely conform to this pattern in size, many of them do in spatial design. Some farmers live on their farms, and others live at the edge of villages, but there is today a noticeable tendency for those who live outside the village proper to build their residences on the main highways leading out of the villages, thus forming something approaching line villages. The Mormon village still persists, however, as a pattern of settlement established when the pioneers first entered Utah.[4]

As for the line type of settlement, it is exemplified by some of the French settlements in Louisiana, which are strung out along main roads and bayous. Where these line settlements are dense, they are line villages with trade centers and neighborhood clusters interspersed among the residences. And they exist where there is individual farm ownership and where there are sugar plantations. If the holdings are small, the farms run back in narrow strips from the road or bayou until they reach swamplands or adjoin the rear ends of farms of another settlement. If the holdings are in plantations, the big fields are not encumbered with residences and other farm buildings. The origin of these line settlements, however, was not primarily in the adjustment to plantation farming. They were established by early French colonists and were further expanded by French Arcadians from Canada. They are therefore a heritage from early colonial days. There are also a few other localities in the United States near the Canadian border where this pattern prevails in a modified form.[5]

Numerous attempts have been made to alter the dispersed type of farm settlement in the United States. And some so-called Utopian communities survived for considerable time, while some village-type settlements were constructed during the 1930's. But all of them failed to reckon with the fact that American farmers have lived on their individual farms for a number of generations and believe that this pattern of settlement has distinct advantages for the efficient management of individually operated farms. Except in areas of sparse settlement, modern means of transportation and communication and transmissible power and light now justify these rationalizations. For farming is an individual enterprise and largely a family enterprise. It generally requires the constant presence of one or more members of the family. And yet, in instances where this is not the case, such as in extensive wheat farming or in the operation of a large cotton plantation, whether private or co-operative, there is little or no reason that some group form of settlement would not be more socially efficient in every way.[6]

---

[4] See Plate 3 for a Mormon village.

[5] Plate 4 shows a French line settlement.

Still, there are adequate historic and utilitarian causes for the existence of the dispersed pattern of settlement in most parts of the United States. Almost from the beginning of settlement, the existence of free or cheap good lands just beyond the boundaries of clustered settlements lured settlers into the edge of the wilderness. Cheap land also induced the development of comparatively large-sized farms. The development of channels of transportation also stimulated deeper penetration into the interior, and the development of commercial agriculture invited the operation of still larger farms. Then too, when farm settlement entered the non-timbered areas, the ease with which farms were developed, plus the fact that people could travel long distances in any direction and could see the homesteads of neighbors who were a quarter of a mile, or even half a mile, away, almost completely removed the need for clustered settlements. Furthermore, the size of farms and the magnitude and diversity of farm enterprises made residence on the farm highly desirable in the interests of efficient management. Now good roads and automobiles have practically eliminated the social isolation that prevailed in pioneer days, and the coming of rural electrification makes available those utilities and facilities that at one time could be provided only where a number of families lived in clustered groups. Thus, although there is probably a tendency for farmsteads to move nearer to roads and electric main lines, there is very little tendency, except in the extensive wheat and livestock areas, to move farm residences into towns. The dominant pattern of dispersed farm settlement is part of the story of spontaneity and rapidity with which land was occupied during the westward expansion. And it is also an accommodation to our basic pattern of family-sized commercial farms, which are relatively large enterprises when compared to farms in areas of the world where village types of farm settlement prevail. Moreover, the pattern has now become so institutionalized that it resists changes which might be very rational.

But there is every reason for the patterns of settlement in areas of new farm development to take advantage of more rationalized planning than could be expected from spontaneous, unguided settlement. In the first area of the Columbia Basin to be settled the road network, the size and shape of farms, and the location of farm residences are all planned to form a line pattern of settlement. In this type of planned settlement the farms average only 60 acres in size and are approximately twice as long as wide. There are thus 20 farm residences per mile along the highways, and they will constitute something approaching line villages. With such an arrangement each family will live on its own farm, and utilities, even a public water system, will be economically possible. This pattern of settlement is planned for the area that is to be irrigated by water from the Grand Coulee Dam in the state of Washington. It may very well become the pattern for other reclamation projects.

---

[6] Plate 5 is an air photograph of a planned farm village settlement on a co-operative plantation in Arkansas. Because of the type of farm management prevailing, this settlement pattern is rational in this case.

PART II

RURAL ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER 3

THE FARM HOME AND FAMILY

BY MARGARET JARMAN HAGOOD

Number and Distribution of Farm Homes in the United States

In most rural populations throughout the world there is a high degree of familism, of family-centered life. The rural environment is such that the rural family contributes a larger share than the urban family in exerting the influences that mold the individual from babyhood to adulthood, in supplying the adult with interpersonal associations, and in affording a place for recreational and other activities that are carried on to a greater extent outside of the home in urban areas. In the United States the influences thought of as "rural" affect farm families more than they affect other rural families.

Most farms in the United States have just one dwelling on the place, and this is the home, whether owned or rented, of the operator and his family. Thus, the pattern of settlement of farm families in most areas of the country is one of dispersion – a pattern quite different from that prevailing in many European countries. The prevailing pattern of farm settlement, whereby there is only one family on each farm, together with the spatial requirements for farming operations, are important in determining the nature and the importance of family life among the farm population. The relatively greater isolation of farm families from other families causes farm people to spend a larger portion of their daily lives in family activities and associations than any other major occupational group spends in that manner.

In 1945 the total number of farm families in the United States was 6,268,577, which is a figure about 7 per cent greater than the number of farms (Table 6). While, as we have said, the predominant settlement pattern throughout most of the country is one of dispersed farm homes with relatively few close neighbors, great differences exist in the degree of density of the farm population – differences caused mainly by the differing amounts of land needed for various types of farming. In 1945 the South, where the chief crops are cotton or tobacco and the acreages in family farms are limited because of high labor requirements, had one occupied dwelling for every 123 acres of farm land. In the West, which includes all of the sparsely settled Rocky Mountain states as well as the Pacific Coast states, farmhouses were only about a fifth as dense. In this area, which contained 28 per cent of the farm land but only 9 per cent of the farm households, each farm family averaged nearly one square mile of farm land (excluding all desert and mountain areas not actually in farms). The situation in the North was somewhat intermediate, with an average of 170 acres per occupied dwelling. These average figures cover up a great deal of variation within each region, but they indicate the fundamental situation whereby most farm families in the United States have relatively few neighboring families near by.

TABLE 6

Farms, Occupied Farm Dwellings, and Land in Farms, United States and Major Regions, January 1945

Area	Farms		Occupied Farm Dwellings		Acres in Farms		Occupied Dwelling per Farm	Acres per Occupied Dwelling
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent		
United States	5,859,169	100.0	6,268,577	100.0	1,141,615,364	100.0	1.07	182
North	2,483,578	42.4	2,629,004	42.0	447,715,207	39.2	1.06	170
South	2,881,135	49.2	3,079,201	49.1	377,794,713	33.1	1.07	123
West	494,456	8.4	560,372	8.9	316,105,444	27.7	1.13	564

Source: 1945 Census of Agriculture.

Though the most common pattern by far is that of just one family to a farm (88 per cent of the farms have only one occupied dwelling, and about four fifths of all farm families live on such farms), there are variations. About 4 per cent of the farms have no family living on them, and 8 per cent have two or more occupied dwellings (Table 7). The presence of a second or third dwelling on the farm is most common in the West, where 28 per cent of the farm families live on farms with more than one occupied dwelling, while for the country as a whole, about one fifth of all farm families live on this type of farm. The families in the additional dwellings are usually not farm-operator families, but, rather, families of hired farm laborers, relatives, farm owners who are not operators, retired persons, or others who may have no connection with the operation of the farm.

Although families of farm operators living on the farms they operate do not have many neighboring farm families, the situation is not nearly so uniform with regard to nonfarm neighboring families. Of course the distance to the nearest population center and the size of that center determine the nearness and the number of nonfarm neighbors that farm families have, and thus affect their family life. There are in the United States about four thousand population centers containing 2,500 or more people, and ten thousand centers of 500 to 2,500 people. In the great majority of cases these centers are surrounded by farming areas. Farms do often reach into the suburban areas of larger cities and into the corporate limits of smaller cities and villages, but these farms form an exception, however important, to the common situation of dispersed farm homes in open-country areas.

Next to the fact of their relative isolation, probably the most significant feature about the distribution of farm families is that half of them live in the South. When interest is focused on production aspects of agriculture, other regions may take first place, but when the interest is focused primarily on farm families and individuals who live on farms, the South is equal in importance to the rest of the country. The cultural heritage of the South, the nature of its agriculture, and its relatively lower economic position all have a profound influence on the lives of farm families in the region. Adequate description of farm homes and families therefore requires differentiations between regions, and some of these differentiations are presented in subsequent chapters on the major agricultural belts and their various types of farming.

TABLE 7

Farms and Occupied Dwellings on Farms, by Number of Occupied Dwellings on Farm, United States and Major Regions, January 1945

Area and Number of Occupied Dwellings on Farm	Farms		Occupied Farm Dwellings	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
UNITED STATES				
Total farms	5,859,169	100.0	6,268,577	100.0
With no occupied dwelling	246,367	4.2	—	—
With 1 occupied dwelling	5,149,276	87.9	5,149,276	82.1
With 2 or more occupied dwellings	463,526	7.9	1,119,301	17.9
NORTH				
Total farms	2,483,578	100.0	2,629,004	100.0
With no occupied dwelling	90,622	3.6	—	—
With 1 occupied dwelling	2,207,287	88.9	2,207,287	84.0
With 2 or more occupied dwellings	185,669	7.5	421,717	16.0
SOUTH				
Total farms	2,881,135	100.0	3,079,201	100.0
With no occupied dwelling	126,409	4.4	—	—
With 1 occupied dwelling	2,536,328	88.0	2,536,328	82.4
With 2 or more occupied dwellings	218,398	7.6	542,873	17.6
WEST				
Total farms	494,456	100.0	560,372	100.0
With no occupied dwelling	29,336	5.9	—	—
With 1 occupied dwelling	405,661	82.1	405,661	72.4
With 2 or more occupied dwellings	59,459	12.0	154,711	27.6

Source: 1945 Census of Agriculture.

Influence of Farm Work on Family Life

The great majority of farms in every region of the country are "family farms" — farms operated as family enterprises, with all or the greater part of the work being done by the operator and members of his family. In 1945 about nine out of every ten farms were of this sort, with only the tenth using one or more full man-years of hired labor during the year. The highest proportion of family farms was in the South, where 94 per cent of the farms used less than the equivalent of one full-time hired worker, while the lowest proportion (79 per cent) was in the West. The fact that the family farm is predominant throughout the country, despite regional differences, exerts a tremendous influence on farm family life.

This tendency for most farms to be family enterprises has been true of

American agriculture ever since the earliest period, even though plantations and the more recent corporation farms have existed contemporaneously. For most farm families this has meant that the place of work is also the place of residence, and that the members of the family participate, in varying degrees, in the work of the farm. Thus, the farmer's wife and children, sharing considerably in his economic activities, consequently spend much more time in personal association with him than the typical urban family spends with the head of the house, who is usually away from home all day at his job, and who generally keeps his family life pretty well separated from his work or business.

The actual amount of farm work done by members of the farm operator's family has declined somewhat since the early pioneers days, but it is still considerable. In the third week of September 1945, when fall harvest work was still under way in many areas, 31 per cent of the nation's farms reported that one or more adult members of the operator's family did at least fifteen hours of farm work per week on an unpaid basis. Beside these unpaid family workers who did substantial amounts of farm work, more than an additional 50 per cent worked without pay on the family farm for some amount of time under fifteen hours during the week. These additional workers included children, who were especially numerous in the South, where more than one million children were doing some farm work without pay during the survey week, which was when cotton picking was at its peak. Of course, many of the farms that did not use unpaid family workers during that week in September used them during other seasons of the year, especially in the summertime, when schools were out.

Some family members who were paid cash wages are not included in the above figures. On 27 per cent of all the farms that used hired labor during that survey week, one or more of the hired workers was related to the farm operator, and these relatives totaled 10 per cent of all the hired farm workers. Nearly half of all these relatives were sons or daughters of farm operators, and were paid cash wages by their fathers. The average age of sons and daughters who were working for wages on their fathers' farms was twenty-five, as compared with thirty-six for hired workers who were not related to the farm operator.

The kind of work done by family members varies. In some cases wives and children do only chores, such as milking, caring for the poultry, and feeding the stock. In other cases, especially if the cultivation or harvest of a crop is done by hand, family members join the farm operator in actual field work. Moreover, the amount and kinds of farm work performed by the farmer's family differ greatly according to the region in which the farm is situated. In the corn and wheat belts the most typical practice is for only the sons to engage in field work, but in the South – and especially on cotton and tobacco farms – wives, daughters, and older relatives commonly do field work at harvest periods.

The lower the economic status of the Southern farm family, the greater the likelihood that the farm wife will do farm work. In a study of 117 white tenant farm women in the Piedmont area of North Carolina, where tobacco was the dominant crop and cotton was second, over three fourths of the wives did a considerable amount of field work. In fact the usual practice was for the wives to do as nearly full-time work as their housekeeping and cooking permitted during chopping, hoeing, and picking times on the cotton farms, or on the tobacco farms during the summer and also during the fall, which is largely spent in grading and preparing the tobacco for market. The urgent need for extra labor on the tobacco farms at harvest time, when the tobacco must be "saved" or "housed," usually meant obtaining work from every member of the family – from the youngest child able to handle leaves to the oldest grandparent, who might be relieved from field work at other times of the year because of age. And of these tenant farm women, seven eighths reported that they liked field and tobacco-barn work better than housework.

Very different views have been expressed concerning work of children on farms. At its best, the situation is one in which children help their parents by performing chores or field work that is not too arduous for their strength, and in which the hours spent daily and weekly on farm work are not so great as to interfere with school attendance, home study, and ample time for recreation. When these are the conditions, many writers – as well as farmers and their wives – have expressed the view that working on the farm along with one or both parents is constructive training for the child, and inculcates a sense of family partnership and shared responsibility in making the family living. At its worst, the child-labor situation in agricultures involves hired farm work not supervised by parents, with the labor being too hard and long for the strength of the child, and with education and other activities normal for children being hindered. There is wide agreement that such labor is disadvantageous to the child's welfare, and some states have enacted legislation limiting, according to age and school schedules, the hours children may work for wages on farms.

Most of the agricultural child-labor situations, however, fall between these two extremes. It is in the South that child labor on farms is most frequent, although in certain special-crop areas in other regions of the country child laborers are often found in the harvesting of fruits and vegetables. In the study of the Piedmont tenants which has already been cited, the modal practice was for most of the children to do farm work in summer, but to attend school fairly regularly unless there was some moderately urgent farm work to be done, in which case they were kept home to help. But there were great variations – some children in these families had never been allowed to go to school, while in other cases the children were sent to school regularly, even though the parents had to work overtime in the evenings to grade the tobacco and prepare it for market. And while in some cases the amount of field work done by younger children was quite light, many of these tenant-farm wives had sons between ten and fourteen years of age who could, they bragged, "plow like a man." The mean age at which these sons learned to plow was eleven years. Among Southern farm families of higher economic and social status than these tenants, young children do less field work, and their education is not interrupted so often.

On farms in every region, except those belonging to quite wealthy families, any sons of high-school age and older who are living at home almost invariably do some farm work during the year, even though they also attend school regularly. It is in this way that the majority of farmers learn to farm – by working with their fathers, usually on an unpaid basis. Sometimes these sons are paid cash wages, or they are given proceeds from the "patches" or the livestock cared for, and sometimes they are taken into an actual partnership with the father. For farm-reared youth who remain on farms after reaching maturity, this vocational training is very useful. But for the large proportion who will have to move to nonfarm areas to find jobs, the training has less specific value. The healthfulness of outdoor work, if not too arduous, and the psychological values of close companionship with the father are on the positive side of the ledger. On the negative side there is the limitation of time available for extracurricular high-school activities and recreation, and of opportunities for socialization through ample association with other young persons.

For the farm family as a whole, the participation of various members in some work or responsibility in operating the farm, does tend to knit the family together more closely with a greater sphere of common interests than most urban families have. From the point of view of personality development in the children and of family relations in general, this greater closeness has both advantages and disadvantages. The situation tends to give the child a sense of "belonging" to his family group, and this is effective in counteracting the various types of fears and feelings of insecurity that may become especially important during adolescence. In some farm families the constant association among family members leads to deep bonds of affectionate relations. But in other families the close association leads to frictions and irritations that individual members cannot easily or frequently escape. In any event, the fact that members of a farm family spend a greater proportion of their time within the family circle means that they spend a smaller proportion with other persons who are of their own age and sex, or who share their particular interests. The operation of such extrahome influences in personality development, socialization, and in a general broadening of outlook and experience is therefore limited.

The identity on farms of the home and the place of work imparts to the family life of the independent farm operator a stability and continuity of association with members of his family that are unequaled in almost any other occupation. It is not to be inferred, however, that *all* farm families share to an equal degree this stable pattern of a relatively permanent home and community. There is a gradation in the pattern of stability proceeding downward from the situation of the operator who owns his farm, through that of the tenant, the sharecropper, the regularly resident hired farm laborer, to, finally, the migratory farm laborer. Tenants and sharecroppers, as well as regular hired hands and migratory workers, often find it necessary to move at frequent intervals, and thus have much less durable community ties than the farm owner.

Farm work generally has less favorable effects on the family life of farm laborers than it does on the family life of farm operators. The farm work

6. A Southern farm family

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Forsythe]

7. The women of this farm family prepare and serve a meal for the men who have been working

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Osborne]

8. Discussing the topics of the day at a neighborhood store

[Courtesy U.S.D.A., photograph by Ackerman]

9. Quilting bee

[Courtesy U.S.D.A., photograph by Ackerman] done by the wives and children of laborers is not done for an enterprise operated by the family, but is done, rather, because of the necessity to supplement the low wage earnings of the chief breadwinner. In many cases the family members do work in close association with the father, but the hours and conditions of work, being set by the employing farmer, are not usually under the laborer's control. The situation of the farm-laborer family most nearly approaches that of the farm-operator family when the farm-laborer family lives regularly on the employing farm in a house furnished by the farm operator. The situation of the families of migratory farm workers, who move from place to place during the course of a year, is at the other extreme. In these migratory families any possible benefits the children derive from learning to work along with their parents are completely outweighed by the lack of a stable residence and by other disadvantages, such as the notoriously low housing standards of the temporary residences that are available to migrant farm workers, and the generally less adequate health, educational, and welfare services that are afforded to them as compared with those provided for families regularly resident in the area.

Patriarchal Type of Family Prevalent on Farms

The term "patriarchal" refers to the type of family in which a high degree of authority is vested in the father. When authority is more equally shared by various members of the family, the family type is termed "democratic" or "equalitarian." In the three centuries since the early colonial period of the United States there has been a slow trend away from the patriarchal type of family to a more democratic type. This trend began in the days of hard frontier life when the wives had to share much of the work and responsibility beyond the confines of the home, and thus came to receive a somewhat greater share of authority. During the last fifty years various trends toward the emancipation of women have also operated to make American family organization more democratic. These trends toward emancipation have included the greater amount of employment of wives in gainful work outside the home, which led to greater economic independence, the granting of suffrage to women, and the development of aids to lighten housework, which meant less drudgery for housewives and more time for participation in social and community affairs. Simultaneously, as modern principles of child psychology were gaining increasing acceptance both in schools and in families, there was a trend toward the "emancipation of children."

In general, the farm family has lagged behind the urban family in the transition from the patriarchal to the democratic type of family organization. But this generalization requires immediate qualification, for it is by no means true that all farm families are patriarchal, or that all urban families are democratic. Nor is it true that families fall neatly into these classifications, typed according to whether it is the father who "wears the pants," "totes the pocketbook," and is "boss" of the family. Infinite gradations exist in the allocation of authority and responsibility between the parents, and between the parents and the children. Moreover, I have observed that while in many farm families both husband and wife declare that the man is the "boss," when the woman has the stronger personality, it is often her judgment that determines not only the allocation of money between farm improvements and family living expenses, but also many of the day-by-day decisions in the conduct of the farming operations. And although authoritarian standards may still be held by the farm parents to be the "right" way of bringing up a family, more modern notions often permeate into the children's standards, causing conflicts to arise between the two generations. These conflicts result in compromises on both sides, but the net effect is increasingly in favor of more latitude being allowed to the children.

The patterns of family organization among the farm population of the United States today of course reveal regional, racial, religious, and nationality influences. In most cases where such influences are marked, they tend to perpetuate a greater degree of authoritarianism in family relations. Often the various ethnic groups maintain other associated cultural patterns, such as those pertaining to mutual aid, religious taboos, and matters of dress and amusement. In almost every case these patterns are designed to preserve some past elements from which the current trend is turning away.

As in many other respects, so in the matter of dominant type of family organization, the South exhibits marked contrasts with the rest of the country. The influence of the plantation system, which supported a patriarchal type of family organization during slavery, carried over to the more numerous white families that did not own slaves. Thus, although the wives of white small farmers participated in field work and other arduous tasks, experiencing many of the hardships encountered by women on the westward-moving frontier, they did not win the degree of independence and recognition of equality that was won by, and that brought advantages to, the frontier wives. The ideologies of the economically superior class — the plantation owners — set the standards of family relations in accordance with their beliefs in the religious, physical, mental, and political superiority of males. Although there has been a trend away from authoritarianism in farm family relations in the South as in other areas, the influence of cultural tradition, together with the lower average of educational and economic status, has tended to retard the shift toward equalitarianism. In contrast, the trend away from the partiarchal type of farm family has proceeded farthest in the West, for the frontier's promotion of democracy, which Frederick Jackson Turner claims was the frontier's most important effect, carried with it the gain in status and independence of women that was largely achieved in that period.

In all regions the coming of automobiles, radios, and movies, and other advances in communication and transportation, together with the trend toward consolidation of schools, have in the last few decades reduced the isolation of farm people by bringing them into closer touch with social developments occuring in the rest of the country. The result has been reflected in further shifts away from the strictly authoritarian type of family organization, although it has been the younger generation's standards of family life that have shown more pronounced effects than have those of the older people living on farms. The elders frequently deplore "the coming of town to the country," and recall with nostalgia "the good old days" when children obeyed their parents, and daughters and sons of courting age did not ride around in automobiles at night or go to "juke-box joints." But despite the regrets of the older generation, only in certain closely knit "cultural island" groups is the shift away from the patriarchal type of family not clearly observable among farm families. The degree to which the shift has taken place, however, varies tremendously in different areas, and also among farm families in the same area.

Foreign-born immigrants today make up only a very small percentage of the heads of farm families. Yet in many farming areas distinctive customs and attitudes still prevail in the second and third generations of nationality groups. As a minority group, Negroes – and native-born Negroes form by far the largest single minority group in the farm population of this country[1] – reveal distinctive and interesting aspects of the whole matter of changes in farm family patterns. The significant fact is that Negroes are an exception to the earlier generalization that ethnic groups generally tend to preserve in family relations older patterns of authoritarianism often associated with religious sanctions. Negroes in the United States today have neither an ancestral religion to preserve nor a long heritage of a patriarchal type of family organization. E. Franklin Frazier, in his social history of the Negro family, has emphasized the matriarchal nature of the Negro family during the time when most of them were slaves, and the carry-over of this tendency to the present is evidenced in the relatively high proportion of Negro families not headed by males. When slaves were transported to this country from Africa or the West Indies, they were rapidly stripped of their native culture, so that family patterns among present-day Negroes are a product of what has happened to the Negro here. With a background of slavery, in which only an incomplete family life was usually permitted, Negroes have tended to pattern their family relations after those of the dominant white group, gradually taking on, with respect to marriage and family practices, more and more of the conventions, standards, and morals of the white communities. The generally low economic status of Negro families and their lack of freedom to participate in many community activities have impeded this transition to some extent, as is shown in the higher rates of illegitimacy and the greater number of broken homes among Negroes. Yet the attitudes and opinions expressed by Negroes living on Southern farms concerning family responsibilities and the upbringing of children differ little from those of the white farm families in the same economic class and in the same communities.

Probably the next largest minority group in the farm population is composed of persons of Mexican birth or descent. These are found mainly in the Southwest, but singly and as family groups they often migrate each season to pick cotton in other areas of the Southwest, to harvest fruits, vegetables, and other crops on the West Coast, to work in the sugar-beet fields of the Mountain and Midwestern states, or to harvest special crops in various areas of the country. The dominant influence on family life in this group is the Catholic Church, which encourages large families and generally supports the traditional authority of the father. Like the Negroes, the Mexican farm families are generally on a low economic and educational level, so that they have been less subject to the influences of cultural trends taking place in the urban sector of the population.

---

[1] In 1940 there were four and a half million Negroes in a total farm population of slightly over thirty million people, and the great majority of these Negroes lived in the South.

Other important ethnic or religious groups of the farm population that have localized settlements, and whose family relations are still affected by earlier cultural patterns they have sought to preserve, are the Mormons in Utah, the Orientals on the West Coast, the Mennonites and similar groups in Pennsylvania, and the various nationality groups from northern Europe that live mainly in the West North Central states. In a special category are the American Indians who live on reservations, principally in the Southwest, and in groups of pure or mixed blood located primarily in the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast states. At the end of the book are cited references that deal with the family life of some of these groups.

Duties and Role of the Farm Wife and Mother

Even though the family organization may still be somewhat of the patriarchal type, more often than not the wife and mother is the central figure in farm family life. The situation in most urban homes may be similar, but the fact that farm people lead a more family-centered life adds importance to the mother's role and functions. Moreover, the average farm woman works harder and does more to fulfill her duties to her husband and her children than does the average urban woman. The "little old gray-haired mother back on the farm" has been romanticized in song, story, and fiction, and — plus some of her culinary works of art — has become a symbol in the nostalgic remembrance of children who have left the farm for the city or for service in the armed forces. And perhaps this particular romantic view is more justified by fact than are most of the others in the current American assortment of ideal types.

There are several conditions that account for the fact that farm wives usually have to work harder on the average than urban wives do. (1) They have more children to be cared for; (2) they must provide a greater share of the extra-school education for their children; (3) they have less well equipped homes, so that, for a given level of living, more work is required per person in the family to prepare meals and do the housecleaning and laundry, and coupled with the larger size of family, the aggregate differential becomes larger; (4) they contribute more to the nonmoney income of the family by doing much of the work connected with producing garden vegetables, chickens, eggs, milk, and butter, and by doing more canning and preserving. Farm wives in the lower economic strata, moreover, must carry out these duties along with a considerable amount of field work, especially in rush seasons. Many farm women thus attest to the truth of the old saying that man labors from sun to sun but woman's work is never done. One North Carolina tenant-farm mother, explaining her preference for field work over housework, said: "In the field there's just one thing, and you can finish it up; but here in the house there's cooking, cleaning, washing, milking, churning, mending, sewing, and always the children – and you don't know what to turn to next."

In 1940 the average number of children under five years of age per woman of child bearing age was nearly twice as high for women on farms as for women in urban areas. Although the number for both groups had declined by about one fifth since 1910, almost the same relative difference was maintained. Some narrowing of this difference has occurred since 1940, but farm women will continue to have more children to care for than urban women until farm families adopt family-limitation practices to the same extent that urban families have. And the drain on physiological energy caused by frequent pregnancies should not be overlooked in comparing the overall contribution of farm and city wives. During most of the reproductive period of many farm women, this heavier load of duties to the family must be carried out under conditions of pregnancy or lactation. Moreover, the farm wife is less likely to go to a hospital for childbirth, and consequently often does not have a week or ten days of complete relief from home responsibilities.

Very few kindergartens, and practically no nursery schools, are available for the children of farm families, and so the farm wife, more often than the urban, has to take complete care of them until they reach school age. It is true that in some rural areas where schools have been consolidated, a school program more diversified than was possible in schools with one, two, or three teachers has been introduced and will include various types of extracurricular activities. Many farm children, however, do not have the advantages of such schools, or of any organized supervision of their use of leisure time. Thus the farm mother – and sometimes the father – who is interested in the fullest personality development of her children often may plan, and participate with her children in various recreational activities, such as picnics, while the natural leader, or leaders, among the farm women in a neighborhood often may arrange some semiorganized program of recreation for the neighborhood children.

The equipment of farm homes, which is, on the average, less adequate than that of nonfarm homes, is discussed in the chapter on levels of living of farm people. But the implications of the fact that farm women have less adequate equipment for the type and amount of work they do are important here. The majority of farm women do their own washing without power-driven machines, and although no statistics are available, it is not likely that any appreciable percentage of farm women have diaper laundry service. In farm homes where the fertility is so high that the next child is born before the preceding one is out of diapers, the washing of these diapers over a long period of years is frequently mentioned by farm mothers as one of the jobs they like least. The washing of men's overalls dirtied through field or barn work is another arduous task when power-driven equipment is not available. The lack of closet space and of clothing chests in the less well equipped farm homes makes it much harder to keep the house looking tidy. Cooking for large and growing families without a sink that has running water, and without a gas or electric range, makes the job of meal preparation a great deal more difficult than it is in homes with more modern equipment.

In view of the numerous family and home duties of farm women, it is not surprising that, on the average, they probably participate less than urban women in organized community activities. For many of the less prosperous farm women occasional church attendance is almost their only type of organizational participation, while religious services, including funerals, are the only gatherings they attend. At the upper end of the economic scale, more of the farm women belong to home demonstration clubs, under the leadership of the Extension Service, parent-teachers' associations, women's auxiliaries of churches, fraternal orders, farmers' organizations, and, occasionally, purely social clubs. Studies in selected areas of the South have shown that wives of farm owners tend to participate in community, educational, and social organizations more frequently than do wives of tenants in the same area. But for the farm wife in the lower economic classes, whether owner or tenant, it may be very difficult to spare the time needed to attend meetings, to get someone to care for the children while she is away from the house, to arrange for transportation to the place of the gathering, or to find money for the type of clothes that will be worn by the other women. Thus, in most of the farm families in the lower third or half of the economic scale, the wife usually has less association with outsiders than her husband, who, in carrying on his farm business, whether or not he participates in formal organizations, comes in contact with storekeepers, bankers, agricultural officials, buyers of his produce, and neighboring farmers.

The Farm Family Life Cycle

Some decades ago English economists who were studying working-class families observed that most such families, with respect to the number of workers in relation to the size of the family to be provided for, went through a typical life cycle. From the time of marriage until near the birth of the first child, the wife can do gainful work, so that during this first stage of the family life cycle the income per household member is thus quite high. After the first child is born the ratio of earners to total number of persons to be supported drops, and it declines further with each succeeding child until the oldest child reaches working age. During this second stage the level of living drops progressively lower, often going below the poverty line. The third stage is reached when children still living at home begin to work and thus augment the family income. Large families may have a period lasting a number of years during which one, two, or three working children are supplementing the father's income, and the level of living is thereby substantially raised. The last stage of the life cycle is reached when all the children have left home, and the father's earning capacity, reduced by his age, may not be sufficient for the support of himself and his wife.

In the United States, Charles P. Loomis, E. L. Kirkpatrick, and others have studied groups of farm families to see if they manifest these same stages in a typical life cycle. They have found that although there are certain modifications, in general the same sequence occurs. The fact that the farm family has a somewhat better opportunity than the industrial working family of increasing its income by increasing the exertion of its adult members means that the level of living may not have to go down as much during the second phase. Also, the fact that farm children can add to the family income at an earlier age than urban children can tends to shorten the second stage and to keep the reduction in the level of living from being so great. This was not the case, however, in a group of fairly prosperous Northern families that had high standards regarding the education of their children. And marked differences in various parts of the country existed among farm families in the expenditure patterns displayed toward the end of the third phase of the life cycle, which is when the children were of courting age. Among the relatively prosperous Northern group there were considerable increases in the proportion of expenditures at this time for clothing and "advancement goods," whereas, in the lower-income Southern group such expenditures rose no more in proportion than did expenditures for food.

The stage in the life cycle that the family has reached of course affects the size of the enterprise that can be operated with family labor. In the case of the owner families in North Carolina who were studied by Loomis, more money was put into the farm enterprise and into investments in land as, during the third phase, the family working force became larger. In the case of the tenant families he studied in the same area, more acres were rented in this phase, but at the same time more money was put into food and clothing for the family working force. Another difference observed between owners and tenants was in the work done by the wife. In owner families the field work by the wife was restricted during the period in which adult children were members of the household and could work. Because the tenant families were poorer, the number of hours of outside work done by the tenant wives remained about the same in all phases except the last.

There are various trends now in evidence which are likely to affect somewhat the meaning of these different stages in the life cycle of the farm family. The raising of educational standards lowers the current economic value of school-age children on the farm. Moreover, as farm youth reach ages between sixteen and twenty, many of them migrate to cities, while many others, although continuing to live at home, take nonfarm jobs to which they commute. Thus, they may not increase the family labor supply available for farm work (and to keep them fully employed, a larger scale of operations would be required), but they may contribute substantially to the family income from nonfarm earnings. During 1943 over three million members of farm operators' households, other than the operator, did some work off the family farm, and over half of them had nonfarm jobs.

Importance of Farm Homes in Producing Children

In every region of the country the birth rate among farm women is higher than that among rural-nonfarm and urban women, and it is far greater than that required to offset deaths in the farm population. If there were not fairly steady migration away from farms, this would lead to a rapid increase in the farm population and in the number of persons available for farm work. Mechanization and other factors, however, have been for some decades decreasing the number of workers needed in agriculture. Thus it has long been necessary for a third to a half of the young people reared on farms to migrate to cities, towns, and villages to find jobs when they reach maturity. The ways in which children are brought up on farms therefore have considerable and important effects on the adult nonfarm population.

This exportation to nonfarm areas of the farm youth produced in excess of replacement needs has gone on for many decades and will continue in the foreseeable future. It has been, and still is, such an important dynamic factor in population redistribution in the United States that much attention has been focused on farm-to-city migration, especially since some estimates of the magnitude of this migration began to be developed in the 1920's. As in the case of many other social phenomena, the facts have often been distorted or exaggerated, and various views that rationalize and moralize have been advanced on the subject. It is vitally important for a student of rural life in the United States to look at the facts and causes (some of which are treated in more detail in a later chapter) of the net migration of young people from farms, and to be objective in appraising the facts.

Data are not available on the proportion of the current adult population of the United States that was reared on farms. But in a survey made by the War Department in 1944 it was revealed that about 45 per cent of the white enlisted men in the army had some farm background or experience, although not all were born and reared on farms. Not many decades ago the majority of the country's citizens were reared on farms, but as the country became more urbanized, the proportion has declined. In 1920 (the earliest year for which age data are available for the farm population) 36 per cent of all the children under fifteen years of age in the United States were living on farms. By 1930 the proportion had decreased to 30 per cent, and in April 1947 it was only 23 per cent. Farm families still have an important share in the task of rearing the next generation of children, but they are playing a declining role in producing tomorrow's citizens.

Exaggerated claims that farm people are the only hope for replenishing the population of cities that are dying out should be discounted. In 1945, births for each thousand urban residents exceeded deaths by 8.4. This crude rate of natural increase in the urban population is, of course, affected by births to young people who have recently migrated from farms, and by the greater proportion in urban areas of individuals of childbearing age. Nevertheless, the net conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that the farm population is no longer responsible for the major part of the population growth in the United States, even though it contributes more than its proportionate share of one fifth. Still, on a relative basis its rate of reproduction is greater than that of any other sector of the population, and it exports many more young people to other areas than arrive on farms from nonfarm areas. The highest rates of natural increase are on Southern farms, and the largest proportion of potential migrants to nonfarm areas are being reared by Southern farm families. The importance of this region's need for better farm homes and for better equipment in those homes is therefore obvious.

In spite of the economic necessity for net migration from farms in order to prevent or keep down an imbalance between population and agricultural resources, the loss of many young farm people from the communities in which they were reared has frequently been deplored by farmers, community leaders, and some rural sociologists. Many programs aimed at rural community or home improvement have had as a stated objective the making of farm life more attractive to youth so that they will not migrate to urban areas. Four factors seem to have been most important in leading to this negative appraisal by many rural people of the net migration of farm youth. One is purely economic. Associated with the typical pattern of the farm family life cycle has been the belief that it is only right for children to contribute to the family income from the time they are old enough to work until the time they marry and establish homes of their own. Since migration of late adolescents cuts into the family labor supply, it often works an economic hardship on the parents, who had been counting on this source of unpaid family labor to increase family income, and perhaps to serve as a basis for expanding farming operations. Another factor is psychological. Parents and neighbors quite naturally do not like to see the breaking of family ties and the loss to the community of many of the youth reared there. And in farm families this breaking of home ties often occurs before the young person has married, so that affectionate parents suffer even keener regret, quite apart from economic motives, at the loss of their children from the family circle. Likewise, rural neighborhood and community leaders are sorry to witness the departure of promising youth who would be expected to add much to community life if they remained. The third factor is the widely held belief that cities are evil, and that the farm is the only place for the good life. Many farm parents deplore migration because they fear that in the city their sons and daughters will have bad associates and be subjected to immoral influences. The fourth, a rather special factor, is that certain rural sociologists, concerned over the future birth rate of the country, deplore migration that takes many young farm people away from the environment in which they would be more likely to have large families.

In spite of the attitudes held about migration from farms, and in spite of positive action taken in certain rural communities to retain their youth, the migration continues, its rate being affected most vitally by the availability of jobs in urban areas. In view of this persistence, a more constructive attitude, which has been taken in recent years by some students of the problem, is that the education of farm youth should be increased and expanded in order to enrich the equipment for social participation of those who remain on farms, and to facilitate the later adjustment and adaptation to urban life of the farm youth who do migrate. These students hold, moreover, that vocational-training, guidance, and placement programs should be developed to aid the migrants from farms in making the occupational shift. In any event, as a result of radios, magazines, and the ready transportation provided by automobiles, there are certain inevitable trends in farm home life which are causing farm-reared children to become increasingly acquainted with a wider sphere of interests. These trends are bringing about some modifications in the upbringing of farm children that, even though not deliberately planned for this purpose, will better prepare those who later move to urban areas to make the transition.

CHAPTER 4

RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

BY DOUGLAS ENSMINGER

The Place of Locality Groups in Rural America

THE rural community is the geographic area with which most of the community's members identify themselves. To ask a rural dweller his community in a given section of the country is almost certain to bring forth a fairly uniform response. A rural New Englander, for example, will most assuredly identify his place of residence with the name of his town or township. A Southern plantation owner will ordinarily identify himself with the larger trade center near his plantation, generally the county seat; while the sharecropper, tenant, or laborer is almost certain to name his local neighborhood. A Midwestern or Western farmer will most likely identify himself with his trade-center community or township, and if he is outside his county when you ask him where he lives, he may give his trade-center community first and then mention his county.

To the New Englander the town is his home and the socio-geographic unit that provides for the education of his children. The church is a town institution, while most formal organizations function within the town's boundaries. Moreover, meetings to discuss issues of importance to rural people are usually called by the individual towns, for town meetings are the traditional means by which the New Englander arrives at some consensus of opinion or of plan for action. Thus the town, or "community," in New England has become institutionalized, and is recognized by both townsmen and outsiders as a functional unit.

In the South the large landowner has few intimate social contacts with families in his immediate neighborhood. His social contacts are usually county-wide or span even greater areas, and the county-seat town is often the focal point for his trade, his recreation, and his church and school activities or requirements. On the other hand, the contacts of the Southern tenants and small landowners' are concentrated in the neighborhood and the near-by town. These tenants and small landowners seldom visit the larger towns and cities — and then only for highly specialized service — and they rarely attend public meetings outside their neighborhood or the near-by town. Among Southern sharecroppers and laborers, and especially among Negroes, social contacts are most intimate and meaningful within the neighborhood, for to these people the neighborhood is both home and community. Having few contacts with formal organizations and institutions other than the school and the church, which are largely neighborhood-centered, this group generally meets with the larger society only through visits to the county seat and an occasional trip to town on Saturday afternoon to visit friends on the streets and purchase supplies. Thus the neighborhood and the community, being about the only world their members know, are to them the most important geographic units.

Throughout the South historical, economic, and social considerations have inhibited the growth of socially significant trade-area communities. The county-seat town is often the only important trade center in the entire county, and more and more it functions as a community center. In contrast, the rural dweller in the North, Middle West, and West has a variety of social contacts, ranging from those in neighborhoods to those in larger towns and cities. His most frequent and meaningful contacts, however, are within the organizations and institutions of the trade center, and these trade-center communities, in addition to offering many organizations designed to meet interests and needs, are rapidly modernizing education through school consolidation. The church is gradually becoming a village-centered institution, and recreation, because of its present highly commercial character, is provided largely by the town.

Rural people in the United States, whatever their differences, share the common experience of living within rural communities, which are the most important groupings in the nation. To the rural family the rural community is "home" in the fullest possible sense, for it encompasses not only the household but the locality as well. Of the nation's nearly 14,000,000 rural families, more than half live in dispersed farm dwellings, while slightly less than half live in hamlets, towns, and villages that serve as social and economic service centers for rural people. Other features of the rural community are perhaps less important than its communal character, but they are not without real significance too. Among these features are the economic relations between the town and its surrounding farms, and the economic and social relations between the various "groups" of the rural community's population — all estimated in terms of wealth, occupation, and status.

Within most rural communities farm families form subgroupings around schools, churches, or general stores. Such social groups are even more localized than the communities, and "neighborliness" is one of their most important bonds. It is probably for this reason alone that these significant units have come to be known as "neighborhoods." Thus we can say that rural families, as well as living in the larger area of the rural community, live in a neighborhood that they readily identify, and that only the degree and the intensity of the common life determine the community and the neighborhood for any individual.

Sociologically defined, the rural *neighborhood* is that socio-geographic unit consisting of a small group of families to whom the area is a symbol of personal identity, and among whom intimate face-to-face contact contributes to a common life which signifies visiting, exchanging work, and providing education for the children or religious worship for the family. Geographically, these neighborhoods may be large or small, depending on the density of population and the topography. Because of the wide differences in the way rural people group themselves geographically, it is not possible to give a generalized definition of the rural community as is true in the case of the neighborhood. Research reveals that the locality group we call the "community" is similar to the neighborhood in that it, too, is a socio-geographic unit to which people express a feeling of belonging. It differs from the neighborhood in that it encompasses a larger area, frequently including several neighborhoods; it may be a single or multi-centered area, generally the former. Because it is a larger locality group with a larger population than the neighborhood, it is capable of providing a greater range of social and economic services. The range of services varies, however, from a few (like the neighborhood) to nearly complete services. The degree of identification people have with the community varies from weak to strong. Most of the residents claim identity with their community and are loyal to it, and because of their social and geographic relationships can act together in providing and supporting needed institutions, organizations, and services. Where neighborhoods prevail they usually cluster around a community center.[1]

For both neighborhoods and communities social unity lies in the fact that the families within them express a feeling of belonging, while those outside recognize the members of the area as a group in and of themselves. The rural community usually has one major service center, with a population ranging from a few hundred to more than 2,500, which provides a variety of social and economic services for both the villagers and the farm people who live within a ten- to twelve-mile radius. This type of community is commonly referred to as a trade-center community, and the people within the area have a feeling of belonging to it and have a sense of community responsibility that can be counted upon when crises arise that call for concerted action. It is within this large trade-center area that schools are consolidated into one main community educational institution. And it is within such communities that farm and village people, having discovered their common interests, are more and more beginning to work together.

The essential differences between neighborhoods and communities are in size of area, population, in services provided, and in the degree of intimacy of relationships. The neighborhood is the smaller geographic group, which may range from 15 to 30 families in the South, and from 20 to 80 families in the Plains. Rural communities range in size from 80 to 500 open-country families, plus an approximately equal and not infrequently larger number in town. The neighborhood usually has a very limited range of

---

[1] See map (Fig. 3).

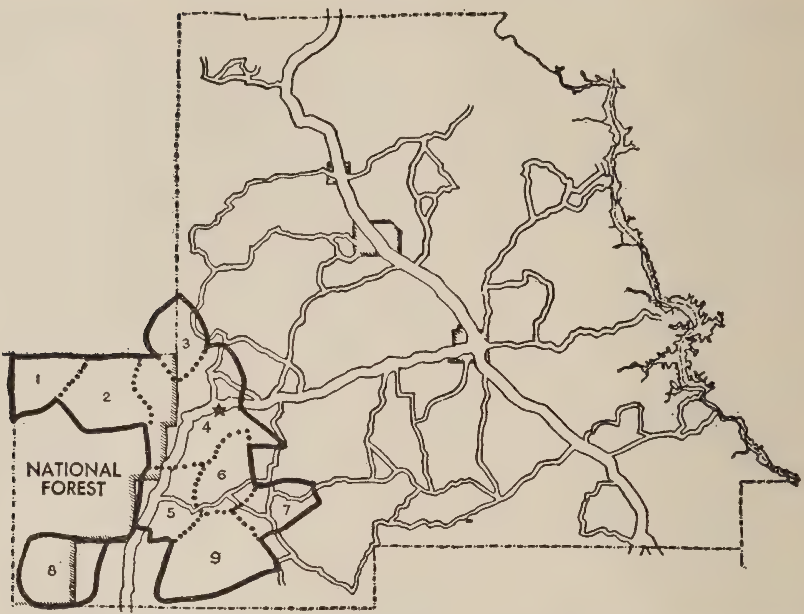


Fig. 3 THE NATURAL COMMUNITY OF MAPLESVILLE, ALABAMA

1. County Line
2. Pleasant Grove "A"
3. Cox
4. Maplesville
5. Stanton
6. Adams
7. Vermont
8. West Chilton
9. Alpine

Three of the eight white neighborhoods attached to Maplesville are split in two by county lines. Cox, due north of Maplesville, has a schoolteacher living in Chilton County who teaches in Bibb County. She really considers herself from Maplesville, although she and her family attend Cox's Chapel in Bibb County. In this neighborhood, as well as in County Line and Pleasant Grove to the east of Maplesville, the home demonstration club is sponsored by the Bibb County authorities. Yet the people feel affiliated with Maplesville. Riderville, south of Maplesville, near the Dallas-Chilton County line, is another example of the artificially split neighborhood. This busy little settlement with freshly painted houses and store is a good farming section. The people there go to Dallas County for most purchases and feel that they belong to Plantersville even though they use the doctor, dentist, and bank in Maplesville. Their church is in Dallas County and Sunday School room is in Chilton County.

The other neighborhoods attached to Maplesville have interesting features. Stanton has a hundred families and five general stores; they are progressive and appreciate the help rendered by the farm agents. Pleasant Hill, another neighborhood, was visited by a tornado in 1932 which destroyed 18 of its 19 Negro homes. All of these neighborhoods say they go to Maplesville to trade because it is nearer. Another obvious explanation is the fact that landlords there are in position to extend credit to tenants on the plantations.

In conclusion, the following facts about the Maplesville Natural Community are significant:

1. Maplesville attracts eight white and three Negro neighborhoods. The larger community numbers about 1,700 people, including the 400 in the village proper.
2. Three of the white neighborhoods are artificially split by county lines.
3. The local school and nearness are the most common reasons given for the neighborhoods' feeling of attachment to Maplesville.

Source: Sanders, Irwin T. and Ensminger, Douglas: *Alabama Rural Communities—a Study of Chilton County*, Bulletin No. 136, Alabama College, Vol. xxxiii, No. 1A; July 1940 services, while the community provides a variety of them. In some places these community services are adequate to meet most of the basic needs of farm and nonfarm residents. Neighborhood relations revolve around families and are very intimate; whereas in the community, which has a larger area than the neighborhood, relationships are more casual and therefore more impersonal, and they are increasingly concerned with individuals and special interests rather than with families.

These fundamental types of social structure — the neighborhood and the community — vary from one part of the country to another, but one fact is common: it is within their confines that the rural dweller spends the greater part of every twenty-four hours, and it is into those confines that the science and culture of the larger society are usually brought to the rural family. In a chain of social contacts which stretches ultimately to the world's end, and in the infinite series of social relationships which derive from that chain, the neighborhood stands first and the community second as modes of intensive common life beyond the common life of the family itself.

An individual first makes contact with the larger society through his family; the neighborhood usually provides the first social experiences extending beyond the family; and the community is the focus of the varied associations that families enter into in order to satisfy their wants. The numerous associations — political, economic, religious, educational, recreative, literary, philanthropic, and professional — that have been created in the family's quest to meet its needs have enriched as well as complicated rural life. It is when family-to-family relationships become institutionalized through these associations existing within particular areas, so that definitely integrated systems of social interaction are formed, that we may define the family groups as neighborhoods and communities.

In the early development of neighborhoods and communities in the United States, one of the first patterns created by families living in a localized area was that formed by the grouping of twelve to forty families primarily for protection and mutual aid. These early groups were forerunners of today's neighborhoods, and they soon provided the nucleuses through which families organized for religious worship and for the education of their children. Organization within the neighborhood, although highly informal, served to help the families meet needs that, as individuals, they found beyond their reach to satisfy. This closely knit, highly informal neighborhood life has since developed into the complex pattern of organization that is characteristic of modern society. While today, as in the past, a farmer and his family may be part of the neighborhood life, his associations very often take him beyond the immediate area of family residence. And still, although the neighborhood as a simple locality group may be gradually disappearing, the neighborhood pattern continues among farmers. Indeed, among some groups, such as Southern sharecroppers and laborers, the common life is confined to the very limited geographic area of the neighborhood. The more common type of rural community life today, however, is a combination of intimate family-to-family association within the neighborhood and an increasing number of both personal and impersonal contacts spread over a much wider area. As for the future, farm people will undoubtedly continue to function as neighbors, but the wider vistas of social participation are bound to open up to them.

What are the origins of the rural community, the phases of its development? As America's population pushed westward, the ever-expanding agricultural economy and rapid industrialization rendered necessary wider areas of contact and communication than the simple neighborhood could afford, and this need was met by the rise of small-town service centers. Just where a town was to grow depended in part on the distances farmers were able and willing to travel, and on the expansion of family-to-family relationships, but in any event, the outer limits of the service area were determined primarily by whether or not a farmer could conveniently drive the distance to and from town by team in one day.

These new service centers soon became the mediums through which the farmer marketed his produce, laid plans for expanding school and recreational programs, and made contact with the still wider locality group. Moreover, the rural service center was the "show window" for the developing industries of the country. Thus, out of new needs a new social phenomenon, now widely known as the rural community, slowly began to emerge. At first these centers were thought of as little more than trade centers for most of the farm families. Psychologically a real difference existed between the villagers and the farmers; their economic interests seemed to conflict, and the villager, inclined to feel superior to the farmer, tended to dictate the pattern of social life in the community. But with the coming of the automobile and the consequent improvement of roads, all this began to change markedly, so that today farmers and villagers in many communities see their interests as reciprocal and mutual, and they therefore participate on an equal basis in organizations and share leadership in school and community programs.

In the United States there are today approximately 35,000 trade-centered rural communities and 240,000 rural neighborhoods. Since they are products of human association, they differ widely in the degree of self-consciousness and social integration they display. Some are in the process of becoming self-conscious groups, while others are disintegrating and disappearing. But in each neighborhood and community the customs and valued traditions of its people greatly influence it as a locality group. Geography, which largely determines the distribution of families, also plays an important role in the making of a neighborhood or a community.

What are some of the current trends in rural communities? In most of them, in accordance with an ever-widening and complex social horizon, individual-to-individual contacts are replacing family-to-family contacts. For just as neighborhood contacts were found inadequate as the frontier receded, so local communities are proving inadequate for the needs of rural families in this modern scientific age. And in much the same way that neighborhoods were linked with larger service centers, so communities today, through expanding human contacts, are forming new relationships that center around large and small cities. As the village center emerged to serve the adjacent neighborhoods, this new service-center pattern has emerged as a result of the increasing dependence of rural families on the outside community to satisfy the needs inspired by an increased standard of living. Since modern living in rural as well as urban America requires a wide range of social and economic services, new and ever-expanding patterns of human association have developed to meet the situation. Self-sufficient communities are in general the exception now rather than the rule. It is more realistic in discussing the pattern of rural life today to talk about a system of service areas, with the larger area usually including several communities, which it unifies through the maintenance of certain services and institutions that the smaller communities, as separate, individual units, cannot support.

Thus the rural family of today is simultaneously participating in many different groupings. The smallest of these groupings is the neighborhood, and next, with its organizations and institutions, is the community, which embraces the specialized areas for both organization and trade. Moreover, the family may participate in a number of different specialized areas. For example, the hospital may form the basis for one center, the purchase of clothing for another, highly specialized recreation for a third, while a fourth center may bring together the dairy, potato, or other commodity producers. As associations multiply, along with alternative choices between towns and cities for trade, school, and church facilities, community life is attaining a complexity that our grandparents never knew. The formation of organizations deliberately designed for the collective pursuit of some special interest does not encourage community feeling in the wider sense of participation. The feeling of community in this sense may eventually be forthcoming, but it depends on more than mere organization, as the instigators of consolidation in many rural school districts can testify. The point is that a community is integral, not partial; it is a whole circle of common life and arises spontaneously out of life itself.

The Significance of Neighborhoods and Communities

Public and private agencies serving rural people are learning through experience that rural dwellers may be reached or motivated most effectively through their neighborhoods and communities. Therefore, when a given agency establishes a county advisory committee, it seeks local leaders who can speak for the people. Some go further and urge the formation of community committees that will bring together the leaders of the local organizations and of the neighborhood. The record to date shows that agencies have succeeded or failed depending upon the degree to which they have entered the culture of the people — that is, the degree to which they have become a part of the community. For to the rural dweller, the neighborhood and the community is a meaningful unit of society. It signifies a group of people who over the years have developed definite ways of thinking and behaving. The understanding of the neighborhood and the community thus presents a distinct challenge to all agencies serving rural people, for unless such agencies can find ways of integrating their programs into the culture of the community, they find it difficult to get the necessary response and co-operation from the residents.

Certain generalizations may be made about the types of services and activities that are most prevalent in neighborhoods and communities. A school, a church, and a store are the service institutions around which most neighborhoods center, while visiting or neighboring and kinship are characteristic features. For the community, a high school, churches, and economic and social services make up the circle of common life. It is true that many areas, having lost their schools, churches, and stores, continue to be neighborhoods, but neighborhoods and communities are more than geographic areas of people, since they have come into existence as such only because of the relationships that have developed between individuals living in a contiguous area.

Inasmuch as rural people have psychological and physical attachments to their neighborhoods and communities, the limits of such areas may be easily determined. This delineation is a preliminary step in understanding neighborhood and community relationships, and it also helps in visualizing how neighborhoods and communities work. Either of two methods – the individual or the group method – may be used in locating and determining the boundaries of neighborhoods and communities. In the individual method a schoolteacher, public health official, extension agent, or research worker may personally visit informed community leaders and secure their help in locating on a detailed highway map the last family to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west that these informants consider as belonging to their neighborhood. The line connecting these points will be an approximate boundary line for the immediate neighborhood. Once the neighborhood is mapped, the next step is to determine the larger community center to which the neighborhood members have the strongest attachments, and in which they have most frequent associations. Where local neighborhoods are still a very important feature of the scene, the above technique will prove useful in the delineation of both neighborhoods and communities, for the neighborhoods will be found to "cluster" about given service centers. But where neighborhoods are not prevalent or strong, the leaders consulted should name the last families on the various roads leading from the main trade center who have the most frequent associations, and identify themselves most closely, with the community that is being mapped. If this procedure is followed for each major service center in distinct, well-integrated communities, the lines separating one community from others will jibe closely with the information supplied by the leaders in those adjacent communities. Any discrepancies can be adjusted by learning from the families in the dividing area the name of the community to which they profess the greater loyalty.

The group method of mapping may be used if several people are interested in the neighborhoods and communities. The people who are best informed about community matters should first be assembled for a two- to three-hour county meeting. The type of people who can usually make the greatest contribution to such a meeting are the representatives of each of the private and public agencies having county offices, and one or more leading citizens from the major community areas of the county. Each person present should understand that the focus is on communities — the places with major towns or centers — and not on the small neighborhoods that may have a one-room school or a crossroads store. The group can be aided by first locating the major centers, and then by concentrating on the area thought to be easiest to delineate. General lines of demarcation are not enough, and therefore details should be included by locating specific farms or landmarks considered as the outer bounds of the community that is being mapped. The group should agree on which families live on these outer limits of the community, and for this step such questions as the following may be helpful. If community meetings were called at two centers on the same night, and all families were equally interested, where would the line that separated the areas of attendance fall? If community-wide programs were planned, for recreation or education, for example, what is the farthest point at which one might expect family interest and response? On the map put an "X" at the point on each road leading from the community center that the group considers the farthest limit for families who feel attached to the community; then connect these points, and the community will be delineated. Having mapped one community area, continue by focusing on one community after another until all major areas have been outlined. Frequently the group can also go as far in the delineation of neighborhoods as to locate most of the recognized ones. Informants who know their areas intimately can locate approximate boundaries for most of them, although experience with the group method suggests that individuals in the group can be fairly precise in bounding communities, but tend to be less exact in locating and bounding neighborhoods. When this method is used, the lines bounding the neighborhoods and communities can be refined in one of the following ways. (1) Place the map in one of the most frequented county offices, and have rural dwellers assist in refining it as they stop in the office; (2) make systematic visits to each community to meet with representatives from each of the indicated neighborhoods; or (3) go into the neighborhoods and visit people who can advise and make needed refinements.

One will discover early in the process of mapping neighborhoods and communities that their boundaries seldom are related to political boundaries, that is, to minor civil divisions, school districts, or counties. The exception to this is the town in New England, which generally functions as a "community." In the Midwest, with the organization of many programs on a township basis, the township is taking on some of the characteristics of a community or neighborhood. In delineating biracial areas, both white and Negro communities and neighborhoods must be mapped, for their neighborhood areas are usually not coterminous, although white and Negro community boundaries will generally be identical.

It should be remembered, however, that neighborhood and community delineation is only a technique for fixing the boundaries of geographic areas in which there is a concentration of relatively fixed and institutionalized patterns of association. It is further examination of the relationships in each area that reveals the types of common experience the families share, and that make each neighborhood and community a significant social unit. And being the product of definite patterns of human association, neighborhoods and communities *are* significant social entities. Where the relationships are institutionalized, the neighborhoods and communities are, in a sense, already organized to do the things the people consider important. But the degree and method of organization will always vary, for the people, as self-conscious groups, have over the years evolved their own way of doing things. In some neighborhoods and communities they simply talk over their problems informally, decide that something should or should not be done, and, if necessary, choose a leader and support his action. Results are achieved just as definitely through these informal group relations as through the more formally organized associations. In fact, in reaching and motivating the common people, one may expect such institutionalized neighborhoods and community relationships to be the most effective channels, while a more formal method of organization may block interest and response if it goes counter to the accepted ways of doing things.

In crystallizing attitudes and in furnishing a focal point around which rural people may reach a consensus, neighborhoods and communities serve a very unique function. The history and development of school consolidation, for example, clearly shows that the people form their pro or con attitudes within the individual community or neighborhood. Some states (New York and Kansas in particular) have therefore passed legislation suggesting that the community be recognized in developing consolidated school programs. For another example, the Soil Conservation Service acknowledges that certain important human relationship factors must be considered when democratically controlled soil conservation districts are planned and operated. For while the soil conservation district is set up to conform with watershed areas, experience now indicates that neighborhoods and communities play an important part in crystallizing public opinion and in motivating farmers to practice conservation. To cite a specific instance, a recent study of the human relationship factors involved in establishing soil conservation in Stephenson County, Illinois, revealed that the spread of conservation practices depended upon giving successful demonstrations within the immediate neighborhood and preferably on the farm of a recognized neighborhood leader. It also showed that in obtaining acceptance of soil conservation programs, each community, being organized differently, should therefore be approached differently.

It is chiefly out of neighborhood and community group relationships that rural leaders have developed. Much discussion of leadership misses the mark because it fails to recognize that leadership is a group phenomenon — that to be a leader, a person must be a product of the group he represents. Moreover leadership does not exist unless the people indicate their acceptance of the leader through some form of group activity. Administrators of public programs repeatedly select individuals to aid them in carrying out their program. If they manage to select the person who is accepted by the neighborhood and community as a leader for the specific program, things go fairly well. Too frequently, however, the person selected is one who is best known to the agency personnel, but who is not considered a leader by the people. And many times programs that might make a real contribution to the community have failed to arouse interest simply because the real, effective leaders were not secured. Careful study of the community will reveal these natural leaders are present in all neighborhoods and communities, but time, patience, determination, and knowledge about leader-group relationships are required to find them. When they have been found, the agency may still have a prolonged educational job ahead in order to obtain their co-operation and effective participation. Yet the only safe and sound approach is through this leadership, for leadership taps the community nerve center. It can, however, work either for or against a program, and in the latter instance little will be accomplished until the influential leaders, having been recognized, are won over. While the real neighborhood and community leaders may or may not be the ones who stand out and provide leadership for organized groups, they will always be the ones who will be of most help in crystallizing neighborhood and community acceptance of new ideas and activities, especially when these are being brought in from the outside.

Formal Organizations and Informal Group Relationships

Although the number of formal and special-interest organizations is steadily increasing, rural areas still operate on a fairly informal basis in carrying on most of their group activities. As an illustration, if a neighbor dies in the middle of the harvest season, leaving his wife and family with a large field of corn to be husked, word is passed around at the school program that all the neighbors are to meet at sunup next morning to shuck the field of corn. Promptly at sunup, then, the farmers and their wives appear at the farmyard of the deceased and begin the day's work. The wives prepare the noonday meal while the men work in the field, and by dusk the job is completed. It is in such direct fashion that many rural communities meet emergency needs. The factors of kinship and of common locality of course contribute much to the personal and informal quality of rural life. But the trend today among rural people is toward patterns of formal organization, and this trend is one of the most significant in all of American rural life. It is important, therefore, to examine the nature of both formal and informal organizations as well as their relationship.

Formal organizations may be defined as associations of two or more persons who are co-operating in a common purpose, and whose association involves a formal structure of members and executive personnel. They may be broadly classified in accordance with the character of the purpose or objective into a few widely differing groups, such as, for example, farm organizations, fraternal bodies, churches, political parties, social clubs, co-operatives, rural youth organizations, economic organizations, civic clubs, and patriotic organizations. Taken together, these associations constitute the formal structure of organization for any community. But underlying and permeating this formal structure is the primary, tremendously intricate network of informal group relationships that may be classified as cliques, gangs, visiting groups, gossip groups, cracker-barrel groups, mutual-aid groups, and family relatives. These informal associations are the least tangible of group relationships, for while their presence and their numerous functions are very real, they do not involve the ritualistic procedures of the formally organized groups, and while they have leaders they do not have elected officers.

That these informal groupings have a profound influence on the functioning of rural community organization is generally recognized. The "whispering campaign" sometimes employed in elections is not idle gossip, and it is usually carried by the elusive "grapevine" that is the communication system of the informal community organization. And within almost every formal organization there is a circle of informal groups that may spell success or failure for any organized efforts made by the formal group. Too often in the analysis of community organization these informal, unofficial, transitory groupings of people are ignored. In one instance, for example, the decision as to whether a rural health association was to be allowed to function in a particular county hinged on the personality of an outstanding local physician, and on his ability to exert a favorable influence on the other physicians. He handled the situation successfully by holding a social dinner at his country home and broaching the question at the height of festivities. The desired decision was obtained, and the badly needed health program was given an opportunity to show what it could do. This sort of procedure may be thought of as a shapeless web of overlapping and often nebulous social relationships, with the web sometimes being thick and intertwined, and at the other times tenuous and flimsy. For these, as well as other, reasons scientific measurement is difficult. The importance of informal group relationships, however, transcends even that of the formal organizations, for it is within these unconscious processes of society that customs, folklore, institutions, and social values have their inception. Moreover, it is inconceivable that any formal organization could arise or continue to function without the interplay of informal groups; the very acceptance of a common purpose and the will toward co-operation require some previous activity and communication of ideas, both of which are important functions of informal organization.

It would be false, therefore, to assume that formal and informal organizations are opposed or exclusive social entities. They are interdependent aspects of the same process of group formation. The formal organizations give society structure and continuity, but they are themselves developed and sustained by informal groups, which they in turn create. Thus any attempt to impose formal types of co-operative organization on rural people must take into consideration the informal organizations as a means of communication, cohesion, and the achievement of consensus. Communication is, as a matter of fact, one of the indispensable functions of informal organizations, for it gives rise to the "we" feeling, to the feeling of belonging which is so important for individual personality development and the maintenance of self-respect and independent choice. Many agencies, both governmental and private, have found out this fact the hard way, that is, through numerous failures in developing and maintaining co-operative organizations.

As for the vital factor of leadership, in informal organizations it depends largely upon direct word-of-mouth communication and upon sufficient opportunity to discuss problems and their social consequences. The leader is quite often some individual who, by combining intellectual and conversational ability, can crystallize opinions and beliefs toward some consensus on day-to-day problems. It may well be that the leader does not occupy any formal position of leadership, or is not consciously thought of as a "leader," but it is leadership that is indicated in such remarks as "*We'll* talk it over," or "Mr. Smith ought to know about that before we decide," or the more indirect "*We'll* get together and make up *our* minds." It is this type of leadership that imparts a sense of security, because a person feels that he and his neighbors, the individuals with whom he rubs shoulders day in and day out, understand each other and "what goes on." The leadership role under such conditions is highly personal and evanescent, and the leader is no longer an independent factor in the chain of social causation, but rather is regarded as a medium or product, as well as the source, of social influences.

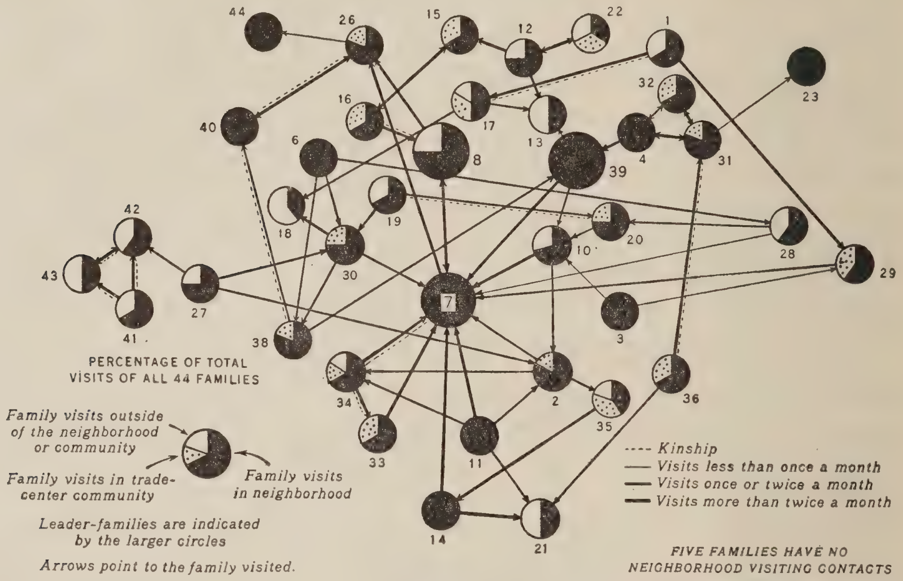
Some individuals may find it difficult to realize that the informal, unofficial, transitory groupings of people are real social entities. It is necessary, therefore, to consider how these groupings can be objectively determined, and their structure and function demonstrated. In any community or neighborhood, or even in one's own club or profession, subtle alignments, cliques, and coteries are known to exist. Certainly it is an unwary observer who does not see the tendency of people to form intimacies and gossip groups, whether in the isolated rural neighborhood or in the urban apartment house. These are social realities to be ignored only at the individual's own risk.

If one were to go into a small rural neighborhood and ask each family to tell with whom it visits and how often, he would be getting at one of the important informal organizations, namely, the visiting group. In an intensive study of 44 white families in White Plains neighborhood in Charles County, Maryland, it was found that of 182 visiting relationships, 123, or 68 per cent, were with families inside the neighborhood.[2] This study used verbal declarations of friendship and of visiting as bases for locating the informal groupings. Other studies that have been conducted have employed as bases the evidences of association implicit in such matters as the exchange of work, the borrowing and trading of material things, the seeking of advice in making important decisions or in times of trouble, and so on.

Rural families are commonly charted according to their geographic relations, that is, by delineation of neighborhoods and communities. The techniques just described chart a neighborhood according to the interpersonal relationships that bind it together, and that may in this sense be thought of as the fabric out of which a neighborhood is made. The importance of these informal channels lies in the fact that it is through them that people influence each other, for attitudes are developed, changed, and modified in informal give-and-take discussions. The real issues to be taken up in formal meetings generally get aired and partially resolved long before the formal meetings take place. These informal groups actually mold public opinion and provide much of the motivation for action.

---

[2] Fig. 4 depicting the pattern of visiting that existed among these families at that time, shows a group of farm families centered principally (as noted by the concentration of arrows) around a leader-family (Number 7). If one were trying to communicate, with a minimum amount of effort, with the maximum number of families in this neighborhood, it would be reasonable to start with the dominant leader-family since it is the nucleus of informal organization.


44
26
15
12
22
1
23
32
16
40
17
13
6
8
39
4
31
19
18
42
20
28
30
10
29
43
27
7
3
41
38
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL VISITS OF ALL 44 FAMILIES
34
2
36
35
Family visits outside of the neighborhood or community
Family visits in trade-center community
Family visits in neighborhood
33
11
---- Kinship
Visits less than once a month
Visits once or twice a month
Visits more than twice a month
Leader-families are indicated by the larger circles
Arrows point to the family visited.
14
21
FIVE FAMILIES HAVE NO NEIGHBORHOOD VISITING CONTACTS

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 4 VISITING PATTERN OF FARM FAMILIES, WHITE PLAINS NEIGHBORHOOD, CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

Farm neighbors have always found it advantageous to work together for mutual benefit, and the house-raising and the quilting bee are only two of many types of informal social organizations that are traditional in American life. On the other hand, the farmer-co-operative movement in the United States, among the earliest manifestations of which were the cheese factory and the local creamery, represents one of the most important aspects of the growth of formal organizations. The number of farmers buying or selling co-operatively increased from a little over half a million in 1919 to more than a million and a third in 1939. (Table 8.) In general, the co-operatives are most highly concentrated in the areas where formally organized and special-interest groups are both numerous and strong.

The great majority of the farmers' co-operatives formed prior to 1922 were local associations for making butter and cheese; for assembling grain at country elevators and shipping it to terminal markets; for packing fruits and vegetables; for collecting and consigning wool; and for shipping live-

TABLE 8

Number and Per Cent of Farms Doing Business through Co-operatives, 1919 and 1939

State	1919		1939	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Maine	1,264	2.6	4,827	12.4
N.H.	122	.6	3,209	19.4
Vermont	1,239	4.3	8,714	37.0
Massachusetts	747	2.3	5,610	17.6
Rhode Island	95	2.3	350	11.6
Connecticut	593	2.6	5,113	24.2
N.E.	4,060	2.6	27,823	20.6
New York	23,494	12.2	61,088	39.9
New Jersey	2,758	9.3	8,491	32.9
Pennsylvania	7,602	3.8	35,677	21.1
M.A.	33,854	8.0	105,256	30.2
Ohio	19,952	7.8	71,599	30.6
Indiana	14,638	7.1	58,184	31.5
Illinois	24,797	10.5	70,296	32.9
Michigan	42,104	21.4	61,199	32.6
Wisconsin	42,848	22.6	90,261	48.3
E.N.C.	144,339	13.3	351,539	34.9
Minnesota	78,314	43.9	130,261	66.0
Iowa	43,350	20.3	96,639	45.3
Missouri	17,748	6.7	58,170	22.7
North Dakota	17,438	22.4	29,412	39.8
South Dakota	20,241	27.1	24,624	34.0
Nebraska	32,543	26.2	44,938	37.1
Kansas	33,654	20.4	44,604	28.5
W.N.C.	243,288	22.2	428,648	39.3
Delaware	548	5.4	1,241	13.8
District of Col.	—	—	1	1.5
Maryland	1,865	3.9	8,599	20.4
Virginia	3,849	2.1	29,725	17.0
W. Va.	625	.7	8,749	8.8
North Carolina	850	.3	17,862	6.4
South Carolina	203	.1	5,381	3.9
Georgia	210	.1	18,201	8.4
Florida	1,367	2.5	6,678	10.7
S.A.	9,517	.8	96,437	9.5
Kentucky	3,498	1.3	28,976	11.1
Tennessee	1,255	.5	22,084	8.9
Alabama	2,678	1.0	16,222	7.0
Mississippi	5,274	1.9	23,384	8.0
E.S.C.	12,705	1.2	89,766	8.8
Arkansas	2,885	1.2	11,470	5.3
Louisiana	4,284	3.2	14,303	9.5
Oklahoma	5,980	3.1	28,541	15.9
Texas	2,486	.6	47,841	11.4
W.S.C.	15,635	1.6	102,155	10.6
Montana	1,948	3.4	14,063	33.6
Idaho	2,336	5.5	18,901	43.3
Wyoming	370	2.3	3,724	24.8
Colorado	5,847	9.8	11,623	22.6
New Mexico	975	3.3	2,357	6.9
Arizona	180	1.8	2,780	15.1
Utah	1,127	4.4	6,940	27.3
Nevada	2	.1	735	20.6
Mount.	12,785	5.2	61,123	26.2
Washington	5,583	8.4	31,402	38.4
Oregon	3,845	7.7	22,402	36.2
California	25,772	21.9	47,851	36.1
Pac.	35,200	15.0	101,655	36.8
U.S.	511,383	7.9	1,364,402	22.4

Source: U.S. Census 1940. Figures for 1919: Statistics of Farmers' Cooperative Business Organization 1920–35, F.C.A.B. Figures for 1939: Agriculture, U.S. Summary, 2nd Series, Table 26, pp. 27–32.

TABLE 9

Organizations in the Deposit, New York Community

Name of Organizations	Number Meetings per Month	Place of Meeting	Date Organized	Membership		Average Attendance *	
				Farm	Village	Farm	Village
American Legion	1	Legion Hall	1920	18	18	2	10
Legion Auxiliary	1	Legion Hall	1921	9	23	3	6
Red Men	1	Bank Bldg.	1934	35	74	15	25
Masonic Lodge	2	Masonic Temple	1868	90	135	25	100
Eastern Star	2	Masonic Temple	1903	60	120	20	40
D.A.R.	1	Home of members	1921	9	55	7	21
Neptune Fire Co.	1	Fire Station — Club rooms	1863	—	50	—	20
Central Fire Co.	1	Village Hall	1890	—	60	—	15
Fortnightly	2	Home of members	1925	2	18	2	16
Garden Club	1	Home of members	1930	6	24	3	24
Study Club	Irregular	Home of members	1937	—	12	—	11
Civic Club	1	Home of members	1913	12	126	2	50
Grange	2	Village Hall	1889	67	23	20	10
Dairymen's League	Irregular	Home of members	1921	94	—	37	—
Sanford Home Bureau	1	Home of members	1923	17	3	12	3
McClure 4-H Boys Club	1	McClure School	1936	12	—	8	—
McClure 4-H Girls Club	1	McClure School	1936	8	2	8	2
Girl Scouts	1	Central School	1923	—	35	—	22
Boy Scouts	1	Central School	1911	—	20	—	15
Booster Club	Irregular	Village Hall	1932	—	45	—	22
Business Men's Association	1	Village Hall	1928	—	25	—	18
Central School	—	—	—	175	423	—	—
Red Cross	Irregular	Village Hall	1932	100	200	6	14
W.C.T.U.	1	Home of members	1888	5	52	2	18
Baptist Church	—	—	—	20	264	10	90
Presbyterian Ch.	—	—	—	25	225	10	70
Catholic Church	—	—	—	40	155	—	—
Episcopal Church	—	—	—	15	25	6	9
Methodist Church	—	—	—	75	225	25	75
Concert Orchestra	4†	Central School	1935	4	16	4	14

* Church attendance is for morning preaching services.
† Meets only during summer.

Source: Ensminger, Douglas, *Diagnosing Rural Community Organization,* A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, May 1939.

stock in carload lots to the public stockyards. With the development of large-scale centralized associations, the formation of local associations became less frequent and existing organizations were consolidated. The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives differs from the other major national farm organizations in that its membership is comprised of farmer business associations rather than of farmers themselves. It has a direct membership of 105 co-operative associations, who in turn have a membership of over

4,800 local co-operatives representing more than 2,400,000 farmer patron members, and despite a decrease in the number of local associations, membership has been increasing.

Concurrent with the phenomenal growth in membership of farmers' co-operatives, the memberships of the three main national farm organizations have, with some minor recessions, shown an increase. In 1945 the American Farm Bureau Federation had almost a million members, the National Farmers Union about one seventh of a million, and the National Grange almost three quarters of a million. Moreover, organizations concerned with soil conservation, health services, welfare, recreation, education, and irrigation have accumulated. By 1946, 1,440 soil conservation districts had been organized and involved the co-operation of over three and a half million farms. According to the census there were 91,637 irrigation enterprises in operation in 1940; and under the Federal government's agricultural conservation program there were 3,029 county committees, with a membership of over 100,000, in operation in 1946. In 1944 the Farm Security Administration (now the Farmers Home Administration) sponsored group medical programs in 782 counties and dental care programs in 219 counties, with the two programs covering 71,075 low-income farm people. In 1945, through the co-operative Agricultural Extension Service, 1,126,320 farm women participated in 49,351 home demonstration clubs, and 1,562,622 rural boys and girls actively participated in 75,146 clubs.

To illustrate the complexity of organization within a given community, we have chosen Deposit, New York, an incorporated village that had 2,028 inhabitants in 1940. Deposit is considered representative of trade-centered communities, since it includes a rural village and the adjacent farming area within an eight-mile radius. The organizational roll call of the Deposit community in 1938 reveals a wide range of special interest and formally organized groups. (Table 9.) The churches also sponsored organized groups in which attendance averaged one half to two thirds the membership, as may be seen in the outline below.

	Membership	Average Attendance
Presbyterian church		
Women's Missionary Society	35	18
Ladies' Committee	30	20
Ladies' Bible Class	60	30
Christian Endeavor	35	25
Sunday School	121	70
Baptist church		
Ladies' Federation	50	20
Dramatics Club	30	15
Men's Club	30	20
Junior Choir	15	12
Senior Choir	24	20
Sunday School	160	100

	Membership	Average Attendance
Methodist church		
Epworth League	30	10
Women's Foreign Missionary Society	25	10
Ladies' Aid Society	40	20
Sunday School	163	75
Episcopal church		
Ladies' Guild	20	17

This analysis should impress upon the reader the fact that rural society is developing a complex and heterogeneous social organization. The trend is clearly toward increased specialization, or "division of labor," as a basis for association, for the nature of rural organizations today reveals that their members are looking to an increasing extent to special interest and formal organizations for meeting special problems and needs. At present, formal organizations are in general most prevalent in the more mature communities of the North, Northeast, and Midwest.

The Changing Character of the Rural Community

Rural America has recently shown an increasing number of public and private agencies engaged in sponsoring programs, and these programs have grown rather haphazardly, with each as a separate endeavor seeking the interest and co-operation of the rural people. This mushrooming of agencies and the establishment of independent county administrative offices began in the early thirties when many public programs were being designed to cope with the depression. Today most of the rural counties throughout the United States have such agencies as Agricultural Extension Service (which was, prior to the depression of the 1930's, the primary agency representing the Department of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges in the counties), Farmers Home Administration, Production and Marketing Administration, Soil Conservation Service, and Rural Electrification Administration. In addition to these agricultural agencies, counties often have organizations concerned with social security, public health, and public welfare, with each organization maintaining county offices. And apart from the governmental agencies, there are numerous county-wide organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, the Red Cross, and the county ministerial association. The agencies are being increasingly criticized, however, because they have not effectively utilized and worked through the established organizational and group channels that have been described in this chapter.

Most of the government agencies are legally responsible for establishing within the county, and sometimes within the community, sponsoring committees of local citizens. In administering their programs, however, the agencies are not legally tied to one another at the county and community levels. Most of them therefore operate separately from the federal to the state level, and thence to the county level. Because of the lack of integration among the various programs designed to reach the county, each agency tends to continue to operate independently in carrying its program from the county level to the community and thus to the rural people.

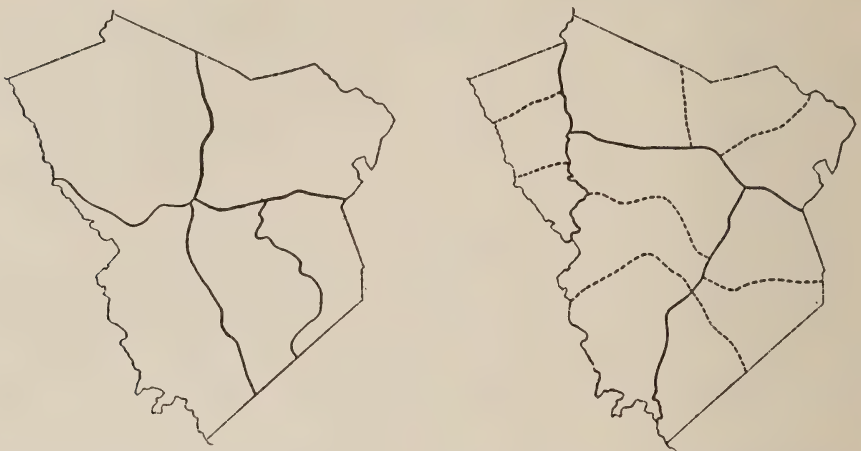
Moreover, since many agency people are specialists in various technical fields of agriculture, and have little or no training in sociology, they often ignore the established patterns of association prevailing among rural people. In line with this apparent dominance of agricultural technology, counties have been subdivided into areas that follow special-crop or livestock interests, soil types, and topographical or drainage features, while the neighborhood and community have not been universally recognized as a basis for subdividing a county into work areas.[3]

It is not only the agricultural agencies that have divided the counties into subareas with little sense or recognition of community. The Department of Public Health often establishes clinics or holds meetings where interest is high, and then arbitrarily divides the county into sections so that few centers, bearing no relation to established communities, become the focal points of contact. And agencies such as the Production and Marketing Administration (formerly AAA) follow minor civil divisions or townships as subunits for administration. In fact, the Production and Marketing Administration generally elects community committeemen on a township basis.

If one were to ask observing persons from the different farming regions what changes are occurring in the community, the replies would in all likelihood be comments such as the following. People, and especially the youth, are leaving and must leave in increasing numbers because of decreasing opportunity in agriculture and rural employment. The village population is being dominated more and more by the older people, many of whom have retired from farming. The one-room schools are finding it difficult to survive because of declining enrollment combined with pressures from state and federal authorities to improve standards and services. In any event, the village-centered consolidated school is replacing the one- and two-room schools. Many of the open-country churches, which report decreases in membership and attendance, are closing, while a few are federating. Besides, the village-centered church is replacing the open-country church, and is displaying renewed leadership and interest in community affairs. Young people want a more vital recreational program than most rural communities will either sanction or provide, and as a result the youth are traveling to near-by towns and cities to participate in commercial recreational programs. As a closely knit, homogeneous group the neighborhood is disappearing, particularly in the older, more settled areas. Informal methods of organization, while still very much a part of rural life, are being increasingly supplemented by formal organizations. Social contacts and interests of rural people have expanded tremendously as, with the great advances in communication and transportation that form a chain linking neighborhood to community to county to district to state to nation. Farm and town people, becoming more aware of their interdependence, are participating jointly in activities whose aim is community betterment. There is increasing recognition of farm people as leaders

---

[3] See maps (Fig. 5).

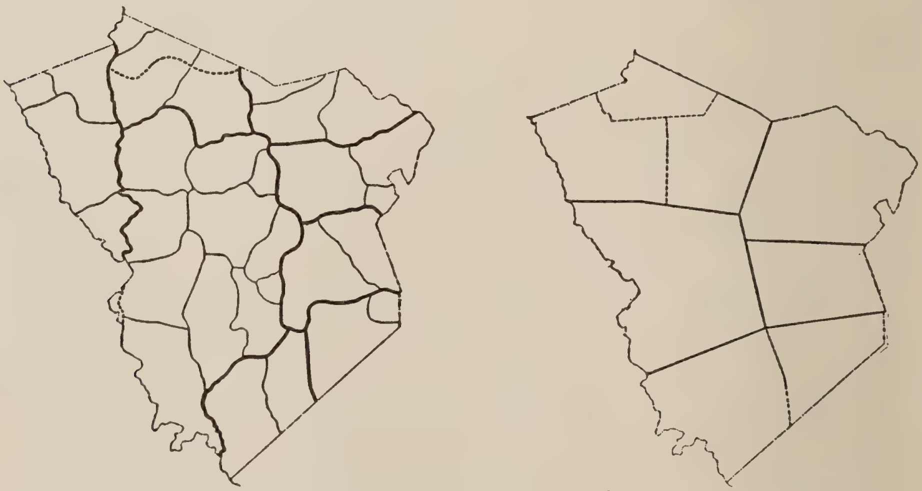


a. FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION DISTRICTS

b. "COMMUNITIES" RECOGNIZED BY THE AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION

——— boundaries between districts

——— boundaries of "big" communities
- - - - - boundaries of "little communities" within "big communities"



c. WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

d. SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE PRIORITY COMMITTEE

——— boundaries of communities
——— boundaries of neighborhoods
- - - - - boundaries of areas attached to community centers outside the county

——— boundaries of districts represented on the committee
- - - - - boundaries of district sub-divisions having representatives on the committee

Fig. 5 VARIOUS LOCALITY GROUPINGS IN GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

both in and outside the community. Communities with limited social and economic resources are having to call more and more upon the county, state, and federal governments for aid in extending to rural people the essential services supplied by such modern facilities as schools, hospitals, and roads. Agencies and programs coming from the outside seldom recognize the "natural" community when they organize the county, and thus hinder the proper integration of community organizations through local leaders. The customary family participation in organized groups is giving away before a trend toward greater individual participation. In both interests and levels of living, communities are tending to become more heterogeneous, and the rural dweller, instead of participating in the affairs of only one community, frequently participates simultaneously in several. In summary, the general trend is toward the development of larger village-centered communities with adequate population and resources to support consolidated schools, adequate recreational programs, and a wide range of economic service, with some of the larger communities evolving institutionalized patterns of behavior whereby they harness their resources and leadership through community councils and other democratic methods of organization.

Undoubtedly, these and other changes have taken place, or are now occurring in the rural communities of America. But change in such areas comes about largely as an orderly process and without much fanfare. The one linear trend observable for many years among communities throughout the country is the trend from locality or simple face-to-face neighborhood relations, to complex and impersonal relations, that is, to nonlocal contacts. A review of the history of settlement and of development of rural America reveals that this country, once predominantly rural, has changed so that it is now a country in which urban centers contain most of the population. This trend continues, along with the changes in the intensity and type of contacts among rural people and between rural and urban dwellers.

The neighborhood was formerly the only social unit or area that concerned its members. Today, except in a few relatively isolated sections, this condition no longer holds true. Farm families today may be part of a local neighborhood in that they "neighbor" with near-by farmers, but at the same time their interest encompasses the local grade school and the consolidated high school at the village center; the parent-teachers association and its sponsored school-lunch programs; the dairy-herd-improvement association; the soil conservation district that joins parts of three counties in one watershed; the church located in the community center; the Extension Service with its scientific help in farming, homemaking, and its sponsored 4-H and home demonstration groups; the Rural Electrification Administration cooperative that has headquarters in the adjacent county seat; and the farmers' organizations seeking to secure appropriate agricultural legislation. During the course of a year they may also, through meetings sponsored by the church, school, extension, or other organization, discuss such issues as world food and agriculture; the United Nations; prices and parity for agriculture and labor; economic outlook and food and crops needed for domestic and world markets; health and medical care; and the problems and needs of rural youth.

"Going to town" is no longer a great occasion, for members of the farm family commonly drive to town to see a movie, or to visit different trade or service centers for their specialized facilities, such as doctors, or hardware and clothing stores. The average farm family subscribes to a "weekly" or two, and if near a metropolitan area, a "daily" is delivered to the door. Radio programs of both local and world-wide interest are tuned in regularly. While still a part of the locality groupings, that is, of the neighborhood and community, the farm family is also now a member of, and a participant in, the world society. And these wider contacts and interests are made and fostered through a broad variety of special-purpose organizations that stem chiefly from the local community.

This trend from the simple to complex forms of associations has resulted in, or given impetus to, two other trends: (1) from family patterns of social participation to individual patterns, and (2) from community wholeness to community segmentation. While there are still many rural sections of the country in which informal methods of organization prevail as the dominant way of mobilizing groups, the trend is increasingly toward the more formal methods. Thus the individual, not the family, becomes the major participant. This trend has accelerated with the development of some of our agricultural programs: the Production and Marketing Administration makes it mandatory that farmers elect "community" committeemen; the Farmers Home Administration requires the appointment of county committeemen; the district organization for soil conservation demands that a governing board be elected; Extension, from its inception, has required local participation in program formation and direction. And without exception individuals, not families, are the participants.

It is not only the agency programs that have increased the formalization of participation; a host of formally organized groups have been "pushed" onto rural people by state and national organizations. Thus some rural communities today have from forty-five to seventy-five separate organized groups, and a farm family, through its various members, commonly participates in from four to ten individual groups.

The earlier definitions of the neighborhood and community emphasized the oneness of interest. Now, while the trade-center community has a certain common interest in such matters as education, religion, trade, and recreation, an increasing number of divergent values and conflicts are emerging. In the smaller group, which has greater homogeneity and fewer goals, the group interests are likely to be less numerous, and to be based on such factors as family descent, length of residence, age, and sex. But as society grows more complex, and the population's occupations, residences, mobility, incomes, and differences in religious beliefs increase, it becomes more differentiated, the number of groups is likely to grow, and the basis of organization assumes a corresponding intricacy.

In analyzing the rural organizations in Litchfield County, Connecticut, it is revealed that "the fractionization of rural Litchfield County society into voluntary contractual associations is explained partly by the diversity of the population and the variety of occupations and ways of life in the county. . . . Considering the wide variety of interests which people in different occupations, income classes, and so on have, it is not surprising that the society they compose is equally differentiated and compartmentalized." This is a vastly different rural society from the one that was developed by our forefathers in the settlement of this country, and that it will continue to change is certain. The challenge lies in understanding the significant group relationships and the basic trends in organization, and in continuing to interpret them in meaningful terms, so that those who seek to guide and give leadership to rural life programs may do so with knowledge and wisdom.

CHAPTER 5

RURAL TRADE AREAS AND VILLAGES

BY DOUGLAS ENSMINGER AND T. WILSON LONGMORE

Stability of the Village

A STUDY made in 1912 of the agricultural towns in Illinois suggested that since hamlets and villages served as channels of communication, the means of communication available at the time of their origin had an influence upon their numbers. It was predicted that many hamlets and villages would therefore decline and disappear as the means of communication improved. Present analyses, however, show that such a prediction was unwarranted, particularly in respect to trade centers for farmers. Instead of small towns wasting away through competition, as was envisioned earlier, trade centers of various sizes actually learned to specialize in the types of services that each could best supply, while farmers learned to accommodate themselves accordingly.

It is estimated by D. G. Marshall that in 1940 there were in the United States 58,818 hamlets, that is, incorporated and unincorporated places with populations of 3,922,037 persons. These figures represented an increase since 1930 of 7 per cent in the number of hamlets, and of 10 per cent in their population. As for villages – that is, incorporated and unincorporated places with populations of between 250 and 2,500 persons – it is estimated that in the same year there were 19,359 with the total population being 13,780,990; this represents a loss since 1930 of only eight villages and a decrease in population of 4 per cent. Combining both hamlets and villages, it is estimated that in 1940 there were 78,177 such centers with populations of under 2,500 persons, and that they encompassed a total population of 17,703,027, which represents an increase of 5 per cent in number and a decrease of 1 percent in population since 1930.

The apparent persistence of these small towns attests to their usefulness and service to rural people. Certainly many of the staples and necessities of farm life are bought in these small places. Furthermore, the importance of the small-town population is evident when it is known that in 1940, 13 per cent of the total population of the United States, 31 per cent of the total rural population, and 65 per cent of the total rural-nonfarm population lived in places with populations of under 2,500 persons.

The pattern of incorporated places has changed only slightly since 1890. That is to say, although the number of incorporated places has more than doubled in the last fifty years, the groups derived by classifying these places according to size have maintained approximately the same relationship to one another during this entire period. The same is true for the populations of these groups during the decade between 1930 and 1940. Prior to 1930 a remarkable shift in population took place from unincorporated territory to cities with populations of 2,500 or more. In fact, the proportion of the total population that lived in incorporated places with populations of 2,500 or more increased from 35 per cent to 57 per cent between 1890 and 1940. But during the same period the proportion of the total population that lived in incorporated places with populations of under 2,500 remained fairly constant at between 7 and 8 per cent. Thus, by 1940 the over-all settlement pattern of American life had become fairly well established. It is significant that the amount of land in farms increased only 8 per cent during the preceding decade, and it is even more significant that the total number of incorporated places increased less than 1 per cent during the same ten-year period.

Types of Villages

In sociologists' attempts to classify the population centers of the United States, the various centers have commonly been divided according to the size of the population into three groups — hamlets, villages, and cities. But the limitations of such a classification system should be acknowledged. First, the population of the center itself is not a completely adequate delineator of the center's functional aspects, for the total population being served is not considered. Second, definition according to the size of a place may give statistical reality to concepts that do not exist as social entities. Nevertheless, such definitions focus attention on the wide variations in the size of service centers, and, with the foregoing limitations in mind, should be used. The generally accepted population aggregates are: hamlet (population under 250), village (population 250 to 2,500), city (population 2,500 and over). Farm people, however, do not differentiate between hamlet and village: their trade center is just their town. And in much of the literature on the subject, reference is made only to the country town with no attempt to differentiate types.

Hamlets have been described by Glenn T. Trewartha in "The Unincorporated Hamlet" as:

> . . . agglomerations of people, together with their residence and work units. This clustering effect should be sufficiently marked so that the field worker is conscious of a perceptible node in the fabric of rural settlement. Defined quantitatively . . . there must be a minimum of four active resi-

> dence units, at least two of which are nonfarm houses. Thus four farmsteads, each located on one corner of a crossroad, does not comprise a hamlet. Counting four and one-half or five people to a residence, this figure of at least four residence units in a hamlet establishes a minimum population of 18 or 20. Supplementary items of the definition stipulate a minimum of six active functional units, residential, business, social, or otherwise, and a total of at least five buildings actively used by human beings. These buildings must be spaced in such a way as to give an appearance of compactness exceeding that of ordinary farmstead spacing. In a hamlet composed of the minimum number of buildings, the maximum linear distance between the outermost buildings should not exceed one-quarter mile.[1]

A population of 250 was suggested as the maximum for hamlets since settlements of this size are frequently incorporated and show development of a distinct business core. A village, described as an aggregation of between 250 and 2,500 people, may be either incorporated or unincorporated, but is more likely to be the former. Urban centers throughout the United States are customarily incorporated separately and are thus politically distinct from the rural territory. There are, however, exceptions to this general rule in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, where places with populations of less than 10,000 are not usually incorporated as municipalities. Rather, it is customary in these localities to include both the rural and urban population within the single political unit of the New England town.

According to the census of 1940 the United States contained 16,752 incorporated places, a figure constituting only about 13 per cent of the total number of places listed in the *Rand McNally Commercial Atlas* of 1941. This smallness of the proportion of incorporated places is due to the relatively large number of small places in the United States, for incorporation is primarily a village and city phenomenon. Thus, the proportion of incorporated places tends to increase with size. In 1940, while 87 per cent of the places with populations of 2,500 or more were incorporated, only 3 per cent of the places with populations under 250, and a little more than half (54 per cent) of the villages (places with populations of 250 to 2,500), were incorporated.

Agricultural hamlets and villages are primarily service centers for farm families. Such a center generally has farm land on all sides, and often it is difficult to determine where the farms leave off and the town begins. Although farm families may trade at more than one center, it is customary for them to seek most of their services in a near-by town. Within the town the specialized-service type of establishment is dominant over the general-store type. With a greater density of population than exists in the surrounding trade area, the town is basically the residence center of shopkeepers, retired farmers, specialists, professional people, and other service workers who cater to the wants of near-by farm families, and together they constitute an economically interdependent group. One distinguishing feature of the country town is its almost complete dependence upon agriculture, with little or no supplementing means of livelihood. This characteristic distinguishes the country town from cities, suburban residence centers, industrial towns, and fishing villages. A special study made in 1930, and reported by Brunner and Kolb in *Rural Trends,* found that 60 per cent of farm families did most of their buying in their "home town." Almost all the rest of the buying was done in neighboring villages or cities. Obviously it is trade that draws farm families to the near-by centers. The degree of population concentration attained by any village is therefore a measure of its resources, and of the advantages of its location as compared with those of its competitors. While success in the struggle for *hinterland,* raw materials, and markets is largely dependent upon the available transportation, communication facilities, and upon the attitudes that village people express towards, and the interest they have in, the farmer and his welfare.

---

[1] Trewartha, Glenn T.: "The Unincorporated Hamlet: An Analysis of Data Sources." *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 1; March, 1941; p. 38.

Country towns partake of the characters of both farms and cities, so that they constitute mid-points on the rural-urban continuum. Their character — their way of life — is thus an amalgam of rural and urban characteristics. Each town, therefore, must be studied individually in order to understand its fundamental differences. Arbitrary classification according to size of population, or according to an incorporated-unincorporated dichotomy, serves only to oversimplify the problem of describing the real character of American towns. A town is characterized as urban or rural according to the traits it displays, and all such traits evoke a series of reactions that hinge upon the particular point of view of the observer. For instance, to the farmer who lives in relative isolation in the countryside, towns with populations of 250 to 2,500 may appear urban, whereas the resident of such a town may view his town as isolated and backward in comparison to, let us say, the county seat town with a population of 10,000 to 20,000. The hamlet tends to be more rural than the village; the village, more rural than the city with a population of 5,000 to 10,000. In fact, in discussing the transitional character of the agricultural hamlet whereby it hovers between open country and small town, V. H. Whitney's study shows that of all the places with populations of less than 2,500 in ten contiguous north central North Carolina counties, the hamlets had a larger proportion than the villages of the total population classified as rural-farm. Not all hamlets and villages, however, can be described rightfully as "agricultural," while on the other hand many places with populations of over 2,500 are nothing more than agricultural trade centers. A place is agricultural, not because of its population concentration, but because of its environmental conditioning by the rhythms of farm life and by the needs of farm people. It is on this basis that we can distinguish agricultural places from mining, lumber, industrial, resort, and suburban places.

Another type of trade center not classifiable according to the population concentration is the country store, which usually grew up at a crossroad. The storekeeper often lives with his family in the store building, while the settlement of families around the store building is usually no more dense than the settlement prevailing in the countryside. In the sense of concentration, it is not accurate to think of this type of trade center as a population center. Its main purpose is to provide the surrounding farm people with the casual, day-to-day type of retail and marketing services. Indeed, the country store thrives on the forgetfulness and afterthought of the farm housewife.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, purchases at the country store fell into three categories: first, clothing, dry goods of all kinds bought by the yard, and ready-made articles; second, tools and articles of household equipment; and third, such food supplies as could not be raised on the farm. Literature about early rural life in America often alludes to the country store as one of the important rural institutions catering not only to the economic wants of the farmer, but to his social needs as well. The "cracker-barrel" and the "big-bellied" iron stove have a symbolic meaning to all Americans, both rural and urban, that indicates the significance of the country store in community life. Truly it can be said that the country store offered the surrounding countrymen a political platform and sociability along with sugar, salt, spices, herbs, flour, coffee, meat, dry goods, matches, clothing, nails and tacks, thread and buttons, and the many other items so necessary in daily life. For the country store has always tried to combine all the necessary services in one establishment.

In general, the country store still performs about the same functions that it performed in the early days, but something new has been added, and the emphasis has shifted from dry goods to canned groceries and other standardized commodities. Now there is a filling station in addition to assorted groceries, hardware, clothing, meat, soda pop, and many other miscellaneous items. Certainly it remains the first transportation and communication point beyond the individual family. Here signs and posters pertaining to matters as varied as politics and auction sales are tacked up for general information, and here also families "catch" rides to town with neighbors. Many country stores include United States Post Offices, so that beside all their other functions they are daily congregating places for people waiting for the mail.

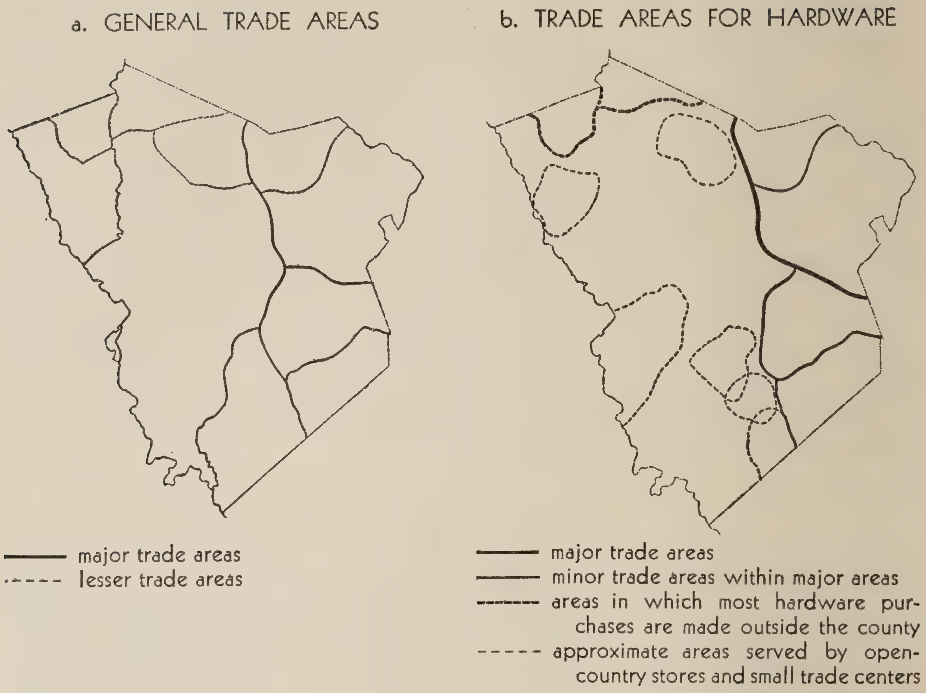
The country store predominates in those areas of the United States, such as the cotton South and the self-sufficing hill areas, which are most rural and geographically isolated. For example, in 1940 in Magoffin County, Kentucky, an isolated hill county, there were 103 general stores, or one for every 170 persons, as compared with the ratio of one general store per 1,811 people in Hamilton County, Iowa.

In this chapter centers have been typed according to whether they are (1) hamlets, (2) villages, (3) country stores, or (4) cities. But each type of center can be described according to the size of the clientele reached by each of the various services associated with that type of center. Thus the country-store type of center has only one trade-service zone, which is that circumscribed by the clientele of a filling station, a general store, a grocery store, a combination (grocery and meat) store, a drinking place, or an eating establishment. The country-town type has a second zone, which includes the first but is larger and extends considerably beyond it, and which is delimited by the clientele of drug store, confectionery, meat-and-fish market, fuel store, auto dealer, hardware store, apparel store, fruit store, garage, shoe repair shop, and a hotel. Included here, too, are a "limited-function" wholesaler, a petroleum bulk dealer, and an assembler of farm commodities. The city, in addition to both primary and secondary trade service zones, has a specialized area that is associated with the clientele of the lumber yard, of stores selling women's ready-to-wear, men's and boys' clothing, household appliances, shoes, furniture, liquor, and of all the other specialized retail services. This area also includes such services as a laundry, a funeral director, a motion-picture theater, and a publishing establishment. Thus, farmers go to one town for certain kinds of services, and to other towns for other kinds. In general, the size of the trade-service zone depends primarily upon the density of population. That is, the primary zone is larger around the small centers, while there may be many primary zones within the incorporated boundaries of cities and large towns. And centers of various sizes tend to distribute themselves according to the area, population, and resources. As for changes, they seem to take place in conjunction with improvement in methods of transportation.

Specialization of Villages

The farmer's trade center is no longer limited by the "team haul," or distance a team could travel and return on the same day. Few farm families today live more than a day's drive from a metropolitan city with a population of 50,000 or more, and, furthermore, most farm people are constantly in touch with centers of urban culture through the radio and newspapers. Farm families patronize small towns and country stores for their day-to-day needs, and are accustomed to turn to the smaller cities (those with populations of less than 50,000) for their specialized and seasonal shopping. The urbanization of country life which results from these contacts of farm people with cities and towns has been made possible by the great revolution in transportation and communication. For although most farm families still live in the open country, the increased use of automobiles and motor trucks as well as the tremendous improvement in roads have led to more frequent trips to town and have provided a wider selection in shopping centers.

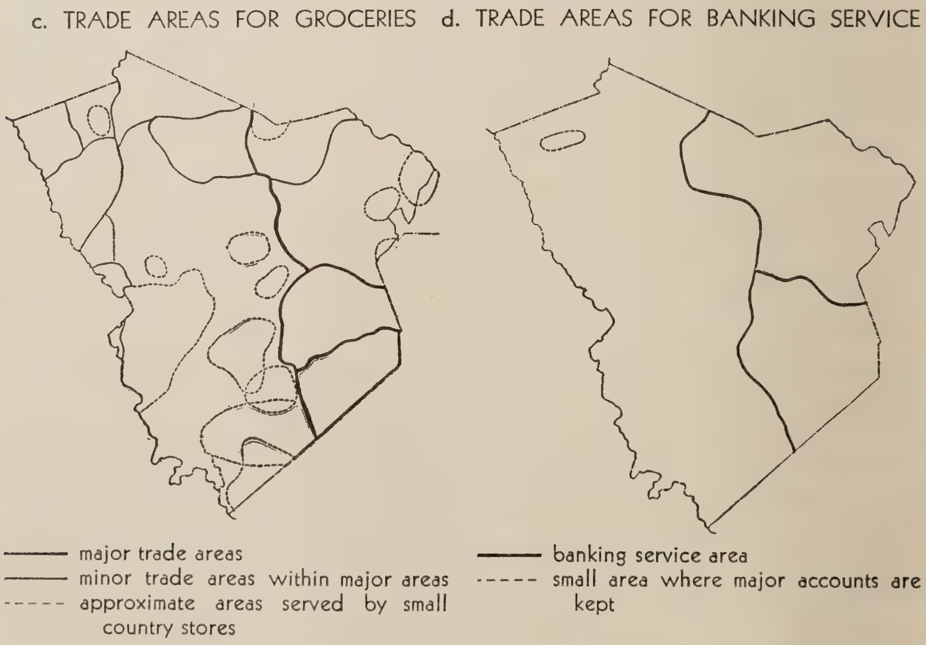
The wide range today in the size and scope of service centers is undoubtedly a result of man's efforts to satisfy the constantly expanding wants of individuals. For people seek satisfaction for their daily wants as close to home as the conditions imposed by geography and transportation permit. In other words, trading has a geographic base. It is for this reason that the general store, the grocery store, and the filling station are usually readily available. And since farm housewives can buy from the most isolated store the same groceries and canned goods that city housewives can buy, competition is equalized between the small-town and the country store. Time and space, however, are still factors in setting the pattern of trade centers and in determining the division of labor between them. Thus, in general, the smaller centers nearest the farmers make no effort to provide all services but tend rather to concentrate on enterprises in which location gives them an advantage. The trend, despite considerable overlapping of service areas, is for each center to specialize in one or more services, so that one may offer out-



a. GENERAL TRADE AREAS

b. TRADE AREAS FOR HARDWARE

—— major trade areas
----- lesser trade areas
—— major trade areas
—— minor trade areas within major areas
------ areas in which most hardware purchases are made outside the county
----- approximate areas served by open-country stores and small trade centers



c. TRADE AREAS FOR GROCERIES

d. TRADE AREAS FOR BANKING SERVICE

—— major trade areas
—— minor trade areas within major areas
----- approximate areas served by small country stores
—— banking service area
----- small area where major accounts are kept

Fig. 6 TYPES OF TRADE AREAS IN GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

standing services in banking, and another hardware or ready-to-wear clothing.[2]

For 1941 Rand McNally lists 125,617 centers having commercial establishments. Of places having commercial significance, 93.2 per cent had populations of under 1,000. In general, the pattern of service-center organization is highly decentralized and hierarchical. Only in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island is the proportion of these places with populations of under 1,000 significantly below the average for the United States as a whole. In 1940 the average number of rural-farm persons for each place with a population of under 2,500 was 250. This average figure indicates the relative dependence of the towns and villages upon the farm population. Thus, towns in Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina, and Iowa, having relatively greater numbers of rural-farm persons, are more dependent upon the surrounding farm population than are towns in Nevada, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Utah, where the ratio is relatively low.

TABLE 10

Selected Service Establishments in the United States, 1940

Services	Number	Population per Service
1. Barber shops	122,197	1,078
2. Beauty parlors	83,071	1,585
3. Cleaning and dyeing	64,120	2,053
4. Garages, automobile repair shops	51,827	2,541
5. Shoe repair shops	50,115	2,627
6. Hotels	27,987	4,706
7. Laundries	22,018	5,980
8. Funeral directors	18,196	7,236
9. Blacksmiths	16,797	7,839
10. Motion picture theatres	15,115	8,711
11. Printing and publishing	13,570	9,703
12. Tourist courts and camps	13,521	9,738
13. Billiard and pool parlors	12,998	10,130
14. Sawmills and planing mills	12,775	10,307
15. Watch, clock and jewelry repair shops	12,485	10,546
16. Photographic studios	10,957	12,017
17. Radio repair shops	10,732	12,269
18. Upholstery and furniture	9,685	13,595
19. Grist mills	9,217	14,285

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Service Establishments, Table 1A (Vol. III).

The environment in a town is distinguished by the fact that within the town boundary there is a grouping of people with a degree of intensity in social interaction relatively greater than that existing in the surrounding farm area. The pattern of association among farm families who have town centers can be described in terms of their distance from the center, as well as in terms of the work patterns of farm life. And the cultural fact that is the most important in conditioning the trading habits of American farm families is the settlement pattern, or the arrangement of the population on the land. In no other country in the world do so many farm families live in dispersed and isolated fashion. Certainly "going to town" is more than a figure of speech in America. Moreover, because agricultural towns are not generally residence places for farm families, certain patterns of behavior have developed with respect to retail shopping and farm marketing. Broadly speaking, many farm families have at least three marketing centers: the country store at the crossroads, the country town, and the city. In recent years the store on wheels and the mail-order house have complicated this pattern somewhat. But most of the farm buying is still done through one, or a combination of the three types of places just listed.

---

[2] See maps (Fig. 6).

TABLE 11

Selected Wholesalers in the United States, 1940

Kind of Business	Number	Population per Business
1. Service and limited function wholesalers	101,627	1,296
2. Petroleum bulk stations	30,825	4,272
3. Assemblers (mainly farm products)	29,122	4,521
4. Agents and bookers	20,903	6,299
5. Manufacturers' sales branches	12,977	10,146
6. Manufacturers' sales offices	5,119	25,722

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940 Census of Business: 1939 Wholesale Trade.

The particular and specialized functions of any given agricultural village are a natural outgrowth of competition with the various other population centers. And as a result, there is an economic interdependence between different communities which gives the agricultural village its distinctive character and pattern of life. As shown in Table 10, the clientele associated with service establishments varies widely. The most numerous of these services are barber shops, which have a ratio of 1,078 population per service. Wholesale businesses, although less varied than retail stores, display certain important differences in clientele as is shown in Table 11. The statistics in these two tables suggest some of the aspects of group behavior that condition the relations between farm families living on isolated farms and their service center or market town. Grocery stores and filling stations tend to have a smaller clientele than drug or hardware stores. Whether a service center has one, two, or three grocery stores, and also whether it has any drugstore at all, are determined in large part by the population base of the service area. The scope of businesses and services offered by an agricultural town therefore is directly related to the size of the surrounding farm population that look to the town for certain services. And the interdependence of farm and village, which is easily demonstrated in the marketing field, constitutes one of the basic relationships in the American rural community.

Not only does there exist a varying pattern of group behavior between individuals and the different kinds of services and businesses, but there is also a wide range from one part of the country to another in the size of clientele for any specified type of service or business. In all probability this variation is due to differences in the standards of living and in the types of farming. Thus Massachusetts, which has a relatively high level of living, displays an entirely different population-business ratio than Mississippi, which has a low level of living. Furthermore, as change takes place in the standard of living in any given area, a corresponding change must take place in the service and business pattern of the market town. In other words, the service center, if it is to hold its trade, must be sensitive to the needs and desires of the people who patronize it. And as the level of living of a community increases, the people demand a better quality and a greater range of services, both economic and social.

In a study of the relationship between the size of a town and the types of merchandising services it offers, which was conducted by C. R. Hoffer of Michigan and reported in Special Experiment Station Bulletin 181, it was found that the minimum populations for towns that can ordinarily be expected to support any one of the various types of stores were as follows:

Type of Store	*Population of Town*	
General stores	No lower limit	
Grocery stores	Approximately	500
Hardware stores	"	500
Furniture stores	"	1,000
Drugstores	"	500
Jewelry stores	"	1,000
Dry-goods stores	"	1,000
Shoe stores	"	1,000
Millinery stores	"	1,000
Variety stores	"	1,500
Women's clothing stores	Occur irregularly (in larger towns)	

Some idea of the population necessary for the operation of retail, service, and wholesale establishments may be gained from Table 12. These figures, showing the number of persons per store or service in 1939, are over-all figures since they include both rural and urban areas, although the per capita requirements for certain items are quite different in towns than in cities. Nevertheless, the figures provide a quantitative basis for estimating the population requirements for store operation.

Table 13 provides a complementary picture, for it presents for the United States as a whole the average clientele associated in 1940 with the major types of retail trade. Filling stations, grocery stores, combination grocery and meat markets, and eating and drinking places all have ratios of under a thousand clients per retail establishment. Drugstores have an intermediate-sized clientele of 2,274. The clientele of confectionery stores, meat and fish markets, fuel and ice plants, and general stores range from 3,000 to 4,000. General stores, however, occur predominantly in strictly rural areas, where the clientele is undoubtedly much smaller than this over-all figure would indicate, and might be treated, rather, as a rural institution. In the 4,000-to-5,000 bracket are hardware stores, motor-vehicle dealers, and fruit and vegetable markets. Women's ready-to-wear, lumberyards, and secondhand stores fall into the 5,000-to-6,000 class, while the 6,000-to-7,000 class includes stores selling men's and boys' clothing, household appliances, shoes, furniture, and liquor. Auto accessory, tire, and battery dealers, cigar stores, bakeries, variety stores, dairy and milk-products stores, and hay, grain, and feed stores have an even larger clientele per business (7,000 to 8,000), while high ratios (8,000 to 9,000 population per business) are exhibited by florists and dry-goods establishments.

TABLE 12

Selected Services Associated with Types of Trade Service Zones

	Retail	Service	Wholesale
I *Primary trade service zone*			
Under 1,000 population per establishment	1. Filling station		
	2. Grocery store		
	3. Combination		
	4. Eating place		
	5. Drinking place		
	6. General store		
II *Secondary trade service zone*			
1,000–2,500	1. Drug store	1. Barber shop	1. Service and limited function wholesalers
		2. Beauty parlor	
		3. Cleaning & dyeing	
2,500–5,000	1. Confectionery	1. Garage	1. Petroleum bulk
	2. Meat and fish	2. Shoe repair	2. Assemblers
	3. Fuel, ice	3. Hotels	
	4. Auto dealer		
	5. Hardware store		
	6. Apparel store		
	7. Fruit		
III *Specialized trade service zone*			
5,000–10,000	1. Women's ready-to-wear	1. Laundries	
	2. Lumber	2. Funeral directors	
	3. Second hand	3. Motion pictures	
	4. Men's-boys' clothes	4. Printing and publishing	
	5. Household appliances		
	6. Shoe stores		
	7. Furniture		
	8. Liquor		
	9. Auto accessories		
	10. Cigar stores		

The Village as an Outgrowth of Human Association

The growth of an agricultural village is undoubtedly determined by people coming together at definite locations for the satisfaction of specific common needs or interests, such as those represented by trade, marketing, health, education, recreation, and religion. And the focal point in most rural villages is the retail shopping center or "Main Street." The outer limits of the local trade area extend, on the average, two to twelve miles from the center, the exact distance depending upon the size of the village and the services it offers, the density of its population, the condition of roads, and the section of the country.

TABLE 13

Population per Retail Establishment (Selected) in the United States (1940)

Kind of Business	Number	Population per Business
1. Filling stations	241,858	544
2. Grocery stores	200,303	657
3. Combinations (grocery and meat)	187,034	704
4. Eating places	169,792	775
5. Drinking places	135,594	971
6. Drug stores	57,903	2,274
7. Confectionery	43,390	3,035
8. Meat and fish markets	42,360	3,108
9. Fuel, ice, fuel-oil dealers	41,172	3,198
10. General stores	39,688	3,318
11. Motor vehicle dealers	31,511	4,179
12. Hardware stores	29,147	4,517
13. Fruit stores, vegetable markets	27,666	4,759
14. Women's ready-to-wear	25,820	5,100
15. Lumber and building materials	25,067	5,253
16. Second-hand stores	23,962	5,495
17. Men's, boys' clothing, hats, etc	21,501	6,124
18. Household appliances, radios	20,913	6,296
19. Shoe stores	20,487	6,427
20. Furniture stores	19,902	6,616
21. Liquor stores	19,136	6,881
22. Accessories, tires, battery	18,525	7,108
23. Cigar stores, cigar stands	18,504	7,116
24. Bakeries, caterers	16,985	7,752
25. Variety stores	16,946	7,770
26. Dairy and milk products	16,834	7,822
27. Hay, grain and feed	16,772	7,851
28. Florists	16,055	8,201
29. Dry goods	15,628	8,425
30. Heating, plumbing, paint and electrical supplies	14,600	9,018
31. Jewelry	14,559	9,044
32. Millinery	10,799	12,193
33. Farm implements, tractors	10,499	12,541
34. Family clothing stores	10,053	13,098
35. Delicatessen stores	9,909	13,288
36. Tailors (custom)	5,674	23,206
37. Department stores	4,074	32,319

Source: Census of Business, Vol. 1, 1939, Retail Trade Part I, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940.

In considering rural villages, it must be kept in mind that no two of them are exactly alike, although there are obviously underlying features common to all. Our early settlers came in groups and, for both social and economic advantage as well as for mutual protection, took up homes in a fairly close settlement pattern. As was discussed in the chapter on "Neighborhoods And Communities," the trade center came into being to satisfy the social and economic needs that the neighborhood was unable to meet. In the early days a farmer's relationships with the trade center were primarily business ones, since it was the place where he went to market his produce and purchase supplies and equipment. With improved means of transportation farmers' contacts with these centers have become more frequent and intimate until today, in addition to being trade or business centers, they are becoming also community centers to which farmers have an increasing attachment.

Certain of the forms of associations among farmers are characteristically primary in nature, being highly personal and social and requiring a maximum of face-to-face contact and community feeling. Such primary associations are best represented by school groups, church groups, lodges, welfare clubs, social clubs, and mutual-aid and neighborhood groups. Other forms of association are characteristically impersonal and require less intimacy and consensus. Such secondary groups are represented by business and merchant groups, bank groups, mail routes, voting-precinct groups, and other organizations of an economic nature. By far the greatest part of the life of farm families revolves around primary group associations. This means that farm people are conditioned to a way of life that relies heavily on personal dealings, word-of-mouth communication, and localism. Moreover, the characteristics of primary groups impose certain restrictions on the number of persons that can be served satisfactorily, and this in turn limits the area of coverage. Since face-to-face contacts cannot be satisfied by large numbers of people, the group necessarily must be small, and since the group is also social in nature, it tends not to cross class lines. It is significant, too, that common standards of action and common creeds of life are more readily attainable in small groups.

Towns, on the other hand, are built primarily out of the coming together of a number of secondary, rather than primary, associations. Facility of communication and transportation in a town center allow for expansion of secondary group contacts and for more efficiency in social and economic organization. In fact, this development of the secondary type of association is the main reason for the existence of the town. Still, despite the improvements in the means of communication and transportation, there is certainly no complete uniformity in the size of clientele served by agencies, businesses, and institutions. This diversity is due not only to the nature of the service itself, but also to what sociologists are wont to call social or cultural lag. The relationship of the size of clientele to the various service agencies and organizations, and the relationship of people to the land, are fundamental relationships existing in society.

Over the years the stability, social relations, and services of the village may be greatly affected by two trends. One is with respect to the impact that the urban commuter is already making, particularly around the larger metropolitan areas. The other is the decentralization of industries and their tendency to locate in the rural village — a trend that is certain to change village relationships. The urban commuter, looking upon the new community primarily as a place of residence, soon begins to expect it to provide more of the services that are provided by the city — electricity, improved telephone services, modern schools, recreation opportunities, all-weather roads, to mention but a few. Because the community to which he has moved looks upon him as an outsider, and since he shows little or no interest in community affairs, his demands for better services tend to go unheeded until the number of such commuters increases and they show concern about, and exert leadership in, the new community. While the process of assimilation into the community may not always be easy, eventually village services tend to be both modernized and expanded, and the relationships within the community take on a new dimension, weaving into the social fabric a new resident whose economic interest lies in the city, and whose social interest is divided between the city and the rural community.

As for the trend towards industrial decentralization, whenever an industry locates within a rural village, there is an immediate change in both services and social relationships. For the new industry generally brings to the community a number of new residents, while within the community those who work in the industry shift from a life rhythm dictated by agriculture to one patterned by industry. This shift is followed by new wants that are satisfied by the addition of new services, and the town tends to serve a double role as it meets the needs of both agriculture and industry. While most towns tend to have their better, and also their somewhat less desirable, residential sections, the development of an industry make these lines of demarcation sharper and increases social stratification. Moreover, in the wake of industrial development will come increased specialization and division of labor, and an interdependence of interests will replace the community of interests that is so characteristic of farming.

While the location of villages is largely determined by the way people have settled on the land and the way they have associated themselves within given centers, the quality and the kinds of services, as well as the nature of the farmers' associations with those services, are increasingly related to the level and standard of living of the people within a given trade area. If the farmer is to improve his level of living, he must have the resources with which to do so. But unless the community makes available such services as electricity, telephones, recreational opportunities, modern schools and churches, and a range of organizations in keeping with farmers' interests, the farmers' level of living cannot be greatly improved. It is significant that more and more farmers are looking to the town to satisfy their cultural needs. Indeed, the town is rapidly becoming an economic and social center for both farm and village people. Thus the rural town of today bids well to become the community center of tomorrow.

CHAPTER 6

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

BY DOUGLAS ENSMINGER

What Is the Rural School Problem?

PUBLIC lecturers, newspaper editors, educators, leaders of farm organizations, and students of rural life all decry the plight of the rural school. A more specific and integrated report, however, was made in 1944 by the White House Conference on Rural Education, which was called to highlight the problem of rural education and to chart a course of action for its improvement. Certainly statistics and other information garnered through research projects are readily available to confirm the validity of statements such as the following. "The rural school remains a horse and buggy institution." "The rural teachers are poorly paid and inadequately trained." "Rural schools are closing by the hundreds because of lack of teachers." "The rural areas cannot and should not be expected to carry the financial load of educating one half of the nation's youth when they have only 10 to 12 per cent of the nation's wealth." "The rural teachers don't stay long enough in the community to get acquainted." "The rural schools cannot cope with the problems created by transient agricultural laborers." These and other such statements give focus to the rural school situation.

A few statistics will help to emphasize the magnitude of rural education as an enterprise. Thus, in 1944, which is the last year for which figures are available on rural and urban schools, the rural schools enrolled 10,560,175 students, while the urban schools enrolled 12,706,441. Moreover, 409,851, or about 49.5 per cent of the nation's teachers, were rural. And they occupied 85.5 per cent of all school buildings. In addition, 2,000 local superintendents, 5,479 supervisors, and 1,088 superintendents of larger administrative units gave leadership to, or were in charge of, the rural schools. At the same time, 4,400,000 pupils, most of whom were rural, were being transported annually in 91,000 buses at a cost of seventy million dollars. As for the annual cost for rural education, it was slightly more than nine hundred million dollars annually, which was 40 per cent of the total annual cost of education.[1]

In 1940, over fifty-seven million people lived in rural areas, which include rural-farm and rural-nonfarm areas and towns and villages with populations of under 2,500. This amounts to almost 43 per cent of the nation's population. But just under half of the nation's children under sixteen years of age attend rural schools. Over half of the states, that is, about twenty-eight, are more rural than urban. All of this is particularly significant in view of the fact that the educational problem tends to mount as the size of the community or degree of urbanity diminishes. For in general the continuous declining birth rates in urban areas mean that they have proportionally fewer children to care for, while the ratio of children to adults reaches its peak in rural areas. Indeed, George A. Works and Simon O. Lesser found that "in every region of the country the burden carried by economically productive farm people is at least half again as great as that carried by the urban adults of the same region." Furthermore, they point out that "in the Southeast it is nearly twice as great." For their figures reveal that "each thousand farm adults of the age group twenty to sixty-four support 791 children of school age, while each thousand city adults supports only 408." Moreover, within the farm population the educational load is in general very unevenly distributed. For example, in South Carolina there are 936 children five through seventeen years of age for each thousand adults in the farm population, whereas in Nevada there are 432.

But what actually is the basic school problem? The evidence is clear that it is created out of the fact that the nation's children are unevenly distributed in relation to wealth. For available data indicate that while rural areas have 50 per cent of the nation's children five through nineteen years of age to educate, these same areas generally have no more than 10 to 12 per cent of the nation's annual income. And since education is construed as a state responsibility, the local community generally provides the basic revenue for it. The results of this system of providing the necessary school revenue are inevitable. The high-wealth areas can, and generally do, provide well for their schools, while the low-wealth areas are not able to provide for the kind of educational programs that are needed. In fact, when viewed in terms of the nation's wealth, it would mean that urban children would have a ten to one advantage over rural children. When viewed in terms of education, however, it actually works out that it is about a two to one advantage. For example, the average salary of rural teachers in 1944 was $1,275, whereas urban teachers received $2,215. The expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance in rural schools was $100, whereas $128 was expended for urban pupils. And the estimated value of school property in rural areas was $2,186,671,168 as compared with $5,841,458,416 for school property in urban areas. Moreover, through the whole range of expenditures from which these averages were computed, the rural communities displayed more marked deviations from the average than did the urban communities. To illustrate the comparatively greater degree to which conditions in rural communities deviate from the average, salaries in many rural areas run as low as four to six hundred dollars a year, and some, especially for rural colored teachers, are much less. The analysis must go further, however, if one is to see how wealth, or the lack of it, operates as the major factor in our present rural educational problem.

---

[1] Howard Dawson: *Trouble at the Cross Roads*, paper presented before the White House Conference on Rural Education, 1944.

By comparing the percentage of children of school age per thousand population with the income per capita, we begin to see the full significance of the relation of the educational problem to the ability of the rural community to provide modern educational opportunities. The states having the highest proportion of children per thousand population generally have the lowest income per capita.[2] Moreover, income per capita in 1939–40 ranged from a high of $960 in Nevada to a low of $195 in Mississippi. Thus, the wealthiest state had five times the per capita income of the poorest. Such statistics have been presented in many different ways, but the conclusion is always the same: the situation is deplorable, and something must be done about it. Yet little has been done. If education, or the lack of it, were an unrelated social phenomenon, we might dismiss the subject without further analysis. We cannot escape the conclusion, however, that education is the central thread around which our democracy is woven. For in almost all our endeavors — social, political, and economic — education is a major controlling factor. Thus, it is in areas of low education that our slums, both rural and urban, exist. It is in these same areas too that we have the lowest levels of living, the highest birth rates, and the highest percentage of juvenile delinquency and crime. And it was within these same areas of low educational attainment, where our health problem looms largest, that we had our highest percentage of Selective Service rejections. In periods of depression the areas that rank low in education tend to rank high with respect to relief loads. In view of all these facts, should we continue to think of education as a cost and an expense? Is it not better, seeing it in its true relationship to our society, to regard it as an investment?

Traveling through the states that have a low per capita income, and looking at the schools, an observer wonders why they are not doing a better job. But when the facts are examined we discover that the poor states try harder than the rich ones. For the facts clearly reveal that it is not because of lack of effort that many states support their schools so poorly. For example, Mississippi, which has the lowest level of support for schools in the United States, spends 3.41 per cent of its income in maintaining its schools, with a median expenditure of $400 per classroom unit.[3] Thus it ranks ninth with respect to percentage of income devoted to education. On the other hand, New York spends only 2.61 per cent of its income for schools, but its median expenditure per classroom unit is $4,100.[4]

---

[2] See chart (Fig. 7).

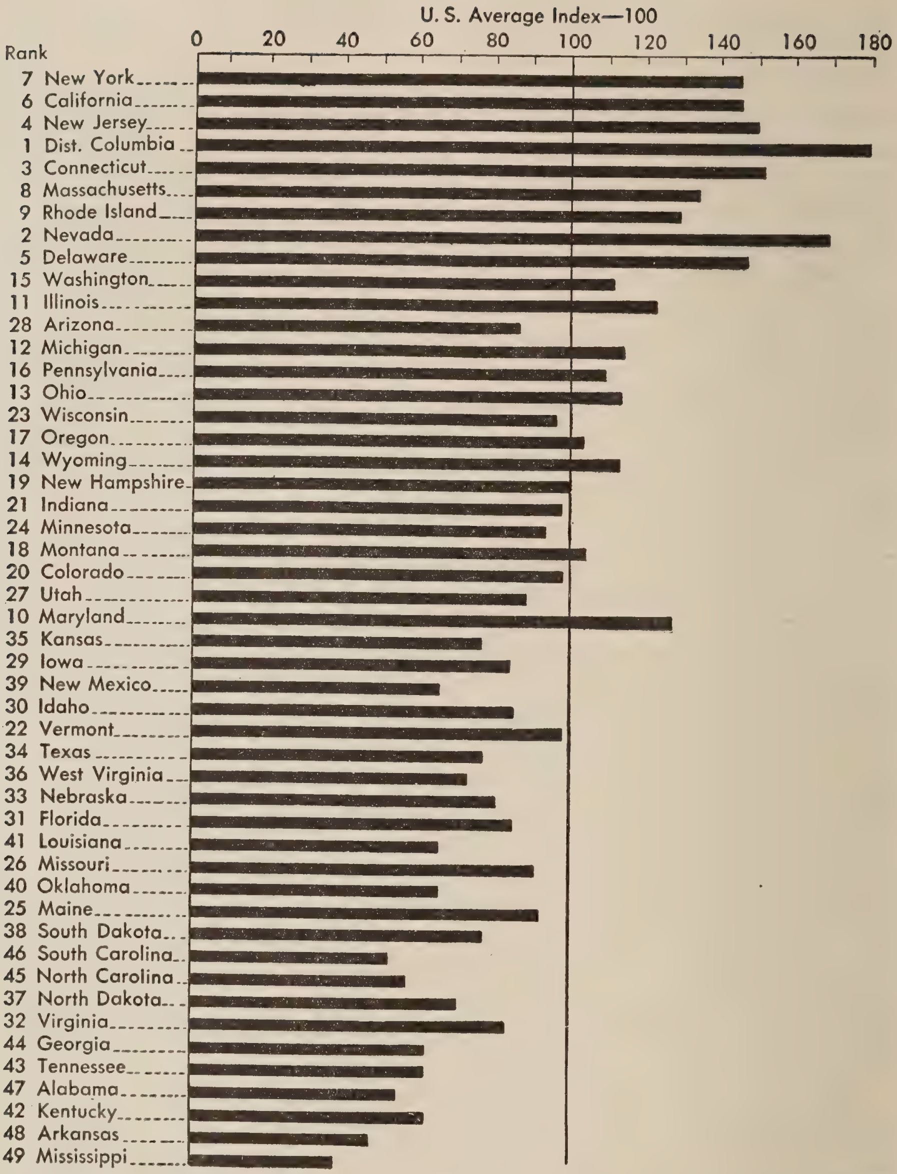
[3] A classroom unit for elementary or grammar school consists of 30 children enrolled, with 27 in average daily attendance; for high school it is 27 enrolled, with 25 in average daily attendance. Cost of expenditure per classroom unit means current expenditures, salaries, books, supplies, heating, and cleaning. Expenses for new buildings and for transportation of children are not included.

Faced with these facts, one must conclude that if all rural children are to have equal educational opportunities, financial aid from outside the community must be forthcoming. And it is a sound argument that the provision of equal educational opportunities for all is as much a function of the Federal government as are aid, guidance, and production in agriculture or the building of highways. Unfortunately there has been, and still is, great opposition to federal aid as a means of equalizing school costs. Often this opposition comes from urban-minded citizens who argue that they should not be taxed in order to educate rural children. But those who advance such arguments fail to recognize that about one half of all the children who are born and educated in rural areas migrate to cities and there find their life's work. Probably the greatest opposition, however, comes from those who argue the "state's rights" thesis, which holds that the provision and supervision of education is, and must remain, the responsibility of the state and the local school community. They point out that federal aid will mean federal control. But those who argue this point of view are not apt students of history, nor are they up on current events. For if they were, they would know that we now have numerous programs in which the federal government shares the financial burden without dominating the program. Probably the most extensive, and certainly one of the oldest, of these programs is that of the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service, which will be discussed later in this chapter. It is sufficient to note here that financing and determining the program for this service, which is the greatest and largest rural adult educational agency in the world, is a joint responsibility of the federal, state, and local governments. And yet the very nature of this program keeps it close to the people; they look upon it as "theirs." There is little doubt in my mind that federal aid to education could be worked out along similar lines. To be sure, progress is being made in creating favorable attitudes toward federal participation in financing rural schools. Therefore it seems fair to predict that the appropriate legislation will be passed in the immediate future. In fact, such a bill was introduced in the Eightieth Congress of the United States and passed the Senate.

The education of Negroes presents some special problems. In general, where Negroes are an important part of the population and by tradition segregated, the services provided for them are decidedly inferior to those offered to the whites. Certainly education follows this pattern, for in the unsegregated schools of the North and West the median expenditure per classroom unit in 1940 was $2,199. But in the dual-system states it was $1,166 for the white schools and only $477 for the Negro schools. It has often been said that we get what we pay for – that and no more. Surely the plight of the Negro rural school supports this statement, for we provide Negroes with the mere crumbs of education. Unfortunately statistics do not reveal the real situation with respect to Negro schools. For many Negro rural school build-

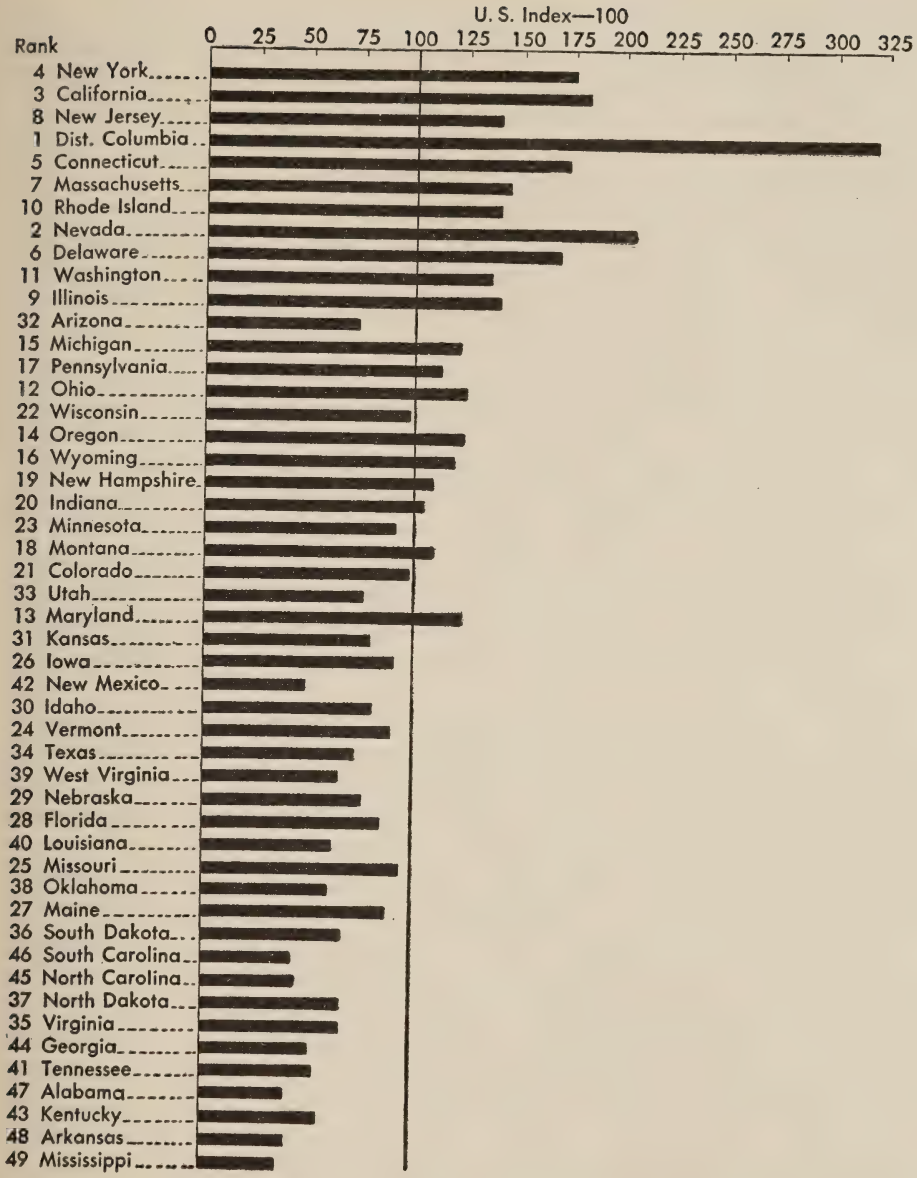
---

[4] See chart (Fig. 8).



Source: John K. Norton and Eugene S. Lawler: "Unfinished Business in American Education." National Education Association and the American Council on Education, Washington, D.C. 1946

Fig. 7 ABILITY OF STATES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION (INCOME PER CAPITA, 1939–40)



Source: John K. Norton and Eugene S. Lawler: "Unfinished Business in American Education." National Education Association and the American Council on Education; Washington, D.C., 1946

Fig. 8 ABILITY OF STATES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION (INCOME PER CHILD, AGES 5–17, 1939–40)

ings are little more than shacks. They are unsightly, unsanitary, and certainly not in keeping with our preachments regarding the provision of free and equal educational opportunities for all. In the South the rural Negro is indeed at the bottom of the heap; he is being deprived of educational opportunities that he must have if he is to improve his level of living and make his contribution to the advancement of civilization.

Since the early days of our history, education has in the United States been considered both a privilege and an obligation. When we realize, then, as the federal census revealed, that in 1940 approximately 3 million children between the ages of five and seventeen were not in school, we should ask ourselves what is wrong. Moreover, in 1940 there were ten million illiterates in the United States, and Selective Service rejected about five million young men for military service because they could not meet the army physical, mental, or educational tests. Although these figures are for the whole country, we can make some generalization for rural areas alone. For of the 19 states that exceeded the national median with respect to the percentage of children aged five to seventeen who were not in any school during 1939–40, 15 were rural states, and most of them were in the South. While of the 12 states that exceeded the United States average with respect to percentage of selectees who from May through September 1941 signed their registration cards with an "X," all but one were rural states, and all of these were in the South.

There is no easy explanation for the large number of illiterates and of children of school age who remained out of school. In general, the concentration of illiteracy and of failure to attend school are within the areas that have "poor" schools. The school programs are not very attractive. They cannot be, because the teachers are not capable of making them so. Many of the parents, especially the illiterates, do not see much value in education. Moreover, since the level of living is low — little more than a subsistence one for many poorly educated parents — the children are needed at home, and are urged to seek employment at an early age so that they can help the family. More fundamental, however, is a complicated cultural phenomenon that must be understood. Briefly, it consists of the fact that in these areas of high illiteracy and poor school attendance the top leadership does not accept education for the masses as a desirable social goal. But as mechanization increases, the top leadership actively supports, and becomes willing to pay for, modernized education. For with mechanization unskilled and uneducated labor, which was an asset when horses, plows, and men were the chief tenders of the crop, becomes a liability. The truth of this is borne out by the fact that as mechanization of the cotton South moves from west to east, the consolidation of schools picks up momentum.

Up to this point our discussion of the rural school problem has dwelt mainly on the economic aspects, and has highlighted briefly the phases constituted by illiteracy and by youth who do not attend school. But the rural school problem has many phases. One of these — and it also has strong economic implications — is that the tenure of rural teachers is short, and that they are less well trained than urban teachers. As was pointed out earlier, in 1944 the average salary of the rural school teacher was $1,275, as compared with $2,215 for urban teachers. The results of this situation are inescapable: the poorer, less stable, less well qualified teachers gravitate to the rural areas. And among those who teach in the rural areas, few stay in the profession long enough to become a part of the community. Many of them, in fact, are transitory, mostly remaining only one year and seldom staying as long as five. Increasingly, because of poor living conditions, the rural teacher lives outside of the area and commutes to work. This instability of tenure and this detachment from the community present a problem for both the school and the community. The school loses because it fails to secure qualified, experienced, and stable teachers; and the community suffers because the teachers do not stay long enough or are unable, because they live outside of the community, to fulfill the leadership responsibilities that communities traditionally assign to teachers.

Indeed, one of the problems that more and more faces each school is the employment of qualified teachers. For years the position of the schoolteacher in the rural community carried with it much prestige. It still does. But prestige is no longer enough to cause those who personally prefer teaching to enter or return to the profession. For today waitresses, factory workers, secretaries, and clerks under Civil Service classification draw higher salaries than do most of the better paid rural teachers. The result is that schools are closing by the hundreds because the local boards can no longer get teachers to accept the meager salaries they can pay. While to keep their doors open hundreds of other schools are employing whomever they can get. This is nothing short of a tragedy, for the school probably has more influence than any other institution except the family in shaping the lives of children. Certainly many of the basic attitudes of one's life are formed during the early school experience. During the war years we accepted the teacher shortage as a normal consequence of war. The situation was met by issuing thousands of emergency certificates, and patriotic local citizens who could qualify met the "call of duty" by volunteering as teachers. It was assumed by many that once the war was over, the teachers would return to their "first love." But this has not happened. A return to the teaching profession would result for many in a substantial lowering of their level of living. No, the teachers will not return to the rural schools until society is willing to pay them a living wage.

Another situation that retards the modernization of rural education is the existence of too many small and inefficient school units. In the early pattern of school organization – and it still prevails, especially in farming areas – each school constituted a separate unit of administration with its own board of education. And the majority of these small districts still consist of one- or two-teacher schools. Most educators agree that herein lies one of the most crucial problems in rural education. It is a problem that can be met in one of two ways: by the organization of larger administrative units, or by the consolidation of schools, that is, the reorganization of attendance units. The first way is probably the more important. In 1940 the rural schools of the United States were administered through over 100,000 local units or school districts. In 1944 there were thirty states that were organized on the basis of local or common school districts. Consolidation diminishes the number of such units. And rural educators are now urging that in the reorganization of the present school districts the new administrative units be large enough to employ a minimum of forty-five teachers and to care for a minimum of 1,200 pupils. For obviously the present small units, many of which are unable to pay a teacher more than six hundred dollars a year, and a sizable number of which have less than twenty pupils — with some, in fact, having only three or four — cannot provide a high quality of educational instruction.

One of the peculiar problems facing the rural school, as it strives to meet the needs of all rural children, is the fact that about one half of the children who grow up on farms, as well as a large proportion of those who live in towns and villages, have in the past moved to the cities to earn a living. Moreover, as the mechanization of agriculture increases, it is almost certain that more and more farm youth will be seeking their life employment outside of agriculture. This situation is further complicated by the fact that increasing numbers of city workers are moving to rural areas, particularly to those adjoining large urban centers. While these people live in a farming area and are generally referred to as rural residents, farming, if practiced, is either a side line or a hobby, with many having only a garden. Thus the rural school, in meeting the needs of all, must somehow train those who will be the future citizens of the rural community, as well as those who are certain to migrate later to the cities. Educational leaders are recommending that, in order to cope with this problem, the school program should provide children with the skills and knowledge necessary for earning a living whether in farming or in industry, and should stimulate and develop leadership for participation as citizens in community affairs. It is further urged that youth should be guided through competent counseling service in deciding which occupation best fits the individual's skills and social temperament. To fulfill this task the schools must be better informed about where their graduates go after they leave, and must become familiar with the kind of adjustments and additional training that they require in fitting into their jobs and their new community relations. Certainly the school has an obligation to assist the child in acquiring a basis for understanding the social and economic interrelationships that exist between the community and society as a whole.

But to so guide and orient youth is no small order. And from what has so far been noted about the plight of the rural school, it is obvious that for most rural schools these objectives are little more than ideals or goals for the future. Still, these objectives are worth working toward. At present the consolidated or centralized rural schools are the only ones that have the resources and the staffs capable of engaging in such a comprehensive program. And yet thousands of rural districts resist change, which strongly suggests that there is much need for rural citizens to be awakened and aroused about what the job of the rural school really is. For as things now stand, the great majority of rural children are not receiving the kind of training they most require to fit them for their life's work. Nor are they being fully developed to assume their roles as citizens and as possible leaders.

Rural School Improvement

The fact that the focus has been on rural school problems should not suggest that the rural schools are standing still. Indeed, in comparison with the other organizations and institutions of the rural community, the schools lead in changes, both as institutions and as sources of leadership for other phases of community life. This is the result in no small part of the persistent pressures that the federal and state governments have applied, both in the past and in the present, to the local communities to modernize educational programs. Not all change, however, has been the result of such pressures, for hundreds of local communities have led the way in school modernization, and have thus more or less set the pattern. It is probably more nearly correct to say that progressive communities have set the pace, while it is to aid and encourage retarded communities that federal and state standards are established, and various kinds of pressures are applied to effect further change and improvement.

There are several important reasons for the continued progress in rural education, some of which are listed here. (1) Both directly and indirectly the rural school affects more people than any other organization or agency in the community, and therefore has greater participation and commands greater interest. (2) The establishment of educational standards is a co-operative responsibility, being shared by the community, the county, and the state and federal governments. Experience indicates that lasting change within the community can best be brought about through such co-operation. (3) As agriculture becomes increasingly mechanized and farmers utilize science more fully, rural leaders realize that the interests of the farming community can best be served through modernized and broadened educational programs. In their eyes, then, education becomes an investment rather than a tax burden. (4) As has already been pointed out, half or more of the youth in most rural communities must seek employment outside those communities. More and more parents are understanding this, and therefore are urging the school to broaden its training program so that it will better equip those who must find their life work outside of agriculture. (5) Where the suburban or rural residents exist in large numbers, they are exerting increasing pressure on the rural communities to provide a quality of education comparable to that in the cities where they work. (6) Continued progress is being made in legislation regarding education. Thus, many states now have laws that permit equalization of school tax funds, and thereby provide hundreds of communities lacking in resources with an opportunity to improve their educational plants and programs.

Moreover, the states are increasing the amount of money they put into education. Taking the nation as a whole, in 1943–44 the states contributed 33.6 per cent of the school funds, the county 5.6 per cent, and the local district 60.8 per cent. Whereas in 1929–30 the states provided 16.7 per cent, the county 10.6 per cent, and the local district 72.7 per cent. (The federal government's contribution is nominal, being 1.4 per cent in 1943–4.) Along with this increase in financial support from the states, the state departments of education have been able, where alert, to raise educational standards, and through constructive supervision to greatly improve the educational conditions in rural America.

Certainly the educational achievement of the rural population is one mark of progress. Unfortunately it is not possible to secure comparable data on those who have completed grade school, high school, and college for each of the census periods. The 1940 census, however, does permit complete analysis of educational achievement of the rural population at that time. In 1940 only 4 per cent of the total rural population twenty-five years and over had not completed at least one year of grade school, while 13 per cent had completed one to four years, 13.7 per cent five to six years, and 36.7 per cent seven to eight years. In this same age group 13.5 per cent had completed one to three years of high school, and 10.3 per cent reported completing four years. Moreover, a considerable number (4.5 per cent) had completed one to three years of college training, and 2.8 per cent reported completing four years or more. The significance of these figures lies in the fact that a large number — 31.1 per cent — had some high-school and college training. It seems justifiable to expect that the number of rural people completing high school and college will steadily increase. Certainly the importance of higher educational attainment for farm people cannot be too strongly emphasized. For agriculture in this country is now in a scientific era. Indeed, farming and homemaking succeed in almost direct proportion to the extent that new findings of science are utilized in an integrated plan for farm and home. And although education itself does not determine standards of rural living, it is an important contributing factor, because it aids greatly in making farming a sound business, and in pointing out the relationship between farming and its related enterprises and marketing demands and price cycles. Furthermore, education in the secondary schools lays the groundwork for educational programs sponsored by the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service, the Public Health Service, and numerous other public and private agencies.

A significant development in rural education is the provision of vocational education for the older high-school pupils, for out-of-school youth, and for adults. As we have said, the job facing the rural school in regard to vocational education is twofold: (1) it must develop a program to meet the needs of those who will remain in agriculture; and (2) it must find out what the vocational training needs will be of those who go into nonagricultural work, and develop a program to meet those needs too. At present, vocational work within the rural high schools is generally limited to agriculture, home economics, and elementary commercial courses. Certainly this is inadequate, since it fails to recognize the point we have previously made regarding the number of rural children who do not remain in agriculture. And any rural program for vocational education must be based on existing needs, and must reflect the current economic and social trends that affect the work and life of the people of the community. For reasons previously discussed in this chapter, notably the relatively low educational level of farm people, the need for further expansion of vocational training for agriculture is urgent. Farmers have less elementary education than any other occupational group. To be sure, the enrollment in vocational courses has increased markedly over the years. In fact, over a ten-year period previous to the war, the number of departments of vocational agriculture increased from 4,513 to 9,059, or 101 per cent; while all-day unit enrollment increased from 154,269 to 340,540, or 121 per cent; part-time enrollment from 10,792 to 49,977, or 363 per cent; and evening, or adult-farmer class, enrollment from 87,138 to 214,582, or 146 per cent.[5] And if graduates of vocational courses in agriculture were to replace the farm operators who retire or die each year, it is estimated that there should be approximately a million farm youth enrolled in all-day classes. But only about 34 per cent of this number were enrolled during 1942, which was the peak year. The advantages of vocational education in agriculture have been available to only a small proportion of the potential all-day, part-time, or evening-class members.

In keeping with the mandate of the basic vocational act, whereby vocational training in agriculture is "designed to meet the needs of persons over 14 years of age who have entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm," the vocational program for agriculture operates to serve three well-defined groups. The group receiving primary attention consists of the in-school farm boys who are planning to engage in farming. The course for this group is organized as a part of the high school program. Instruction for the other two groups, out-of-school farm youth and adult farmers, is provided in part-time, day, or night classes.

The committee that studied and reported on the postwar problems of vocational education suggested that the long-time vocational education program be concerned with: "(1) providing opportunities for equipping in-school youth to enter an occupation in which he has interest, for which he has the aptitude, and that offers a reasonable opportunity for advancement; (2) providing opportunities for training in a greater number and variety of occupations if all youth are to have equal opportunity to prepare for work during their school years; (3) providing opportunities for training in the local schools or in the local field of employment as far as possible; in schools serving a larger area for some occupations; and in special State schools for specialized occupations; (4) providing opportunities for youth to obtain organized progressive work experience on the job on a preparatory basis; (5) providing opportunities for organized systematic in-service training on an extension basis for apprentices and other employed workers; (6) providing opportunities for training in part-time and evening classes for out-of-school youth and adults on either a preparatory or supplementary basis; (7) providing an adequate program of guidance services available to all youth and adults, whether in school or out of school; (8) providing an adequate background of training for effective family living for all youth and adults."[6]

---

[5] *Vocational Education in the Years Ahead: A Report of a Committee To Study Postwar Problems in Vocational Education*, p. 141, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1945.

A careful analysis of school and community trends reveals that the rural school of tomorrow is emerging as the dominant community institution. This is encouraging, since progress in rural education — indeed, progress in community development — will be realized to the extent that the rural school rises to the occasion and truly becomes the center of community life. The trend toward reorganization, taking full account of neighborhood-community patterns and change, was well under way before the war. And it is almost certain that the trend will increase in the years ahead. In hastening and directing the consolidation of the present inefficient units, educators and students of rural organization are working together in seeking to combine the best features of administrative efficiency and economy with the patterns of community development. For recent experience with consolidation clearly reveals that unless the school-consolidation movement recognizes the existence and importance of the community, opposition to the programs is likely to develop. Moreover, if the school does not become an integral part of the community, its usefulness is limited. The larger school units, so long as they recognize and conform to community patterns, have much in their favor, because they will give the school a taxable unit and a population base that are sufficiently large to support and maintain the kind of school program that rural people will be demanding in the future. The larger unit can also employ and retain better-prepared teachers and give the children instruction that is more in keeping with their needs. Finally, these more efficient school units can become the center of community life by providing library services, recreational facilities, and adult and vocational courses to all who can be encouraged to participate.

As we have stated earlier, the larger school unit may be obtained through either of two plans, one concentrating on the administrative unit, the other, on the attendance unit. The local school administrative unit is a basic one and is composed of all the area under a single system of school administration. That is, its schools are controlled by a board of education of which the executive head is usually the superintendent of schools. And it generally constitutes a local taxing unit. Depending on the section of the country, the administrative unit will be referred to by such terms as school district, community district, the consolidated or unit district, independent cities or districts, elementary districts, high-school districts, the township district, and the county school district. On the other hand, the local school-attendance unit includes the area served by a particular school, with a principal or principal-teacher in charge. For example, a high-school attendance unit may cover an area served by one or more elementary schools, each consisting of an attendance unit.

In urging the further development of larger school units, the subcommittee on Organization and Administration of Rural Education of the White House Conference on Rural Education (of which I was a member) suggested the following criteria as guides in establishing satisfactory administrative units: "(1) The administrative unit should be sufficiently large to maintain, with reasonable economy, the commonly accepted education program in the state for at least twelve grades of elementary and high school education; (2) the administrative unit should, so far as possible, be an area within which people have a certain common interest, such as trade, civic, or social activities; (3) the administrative unit should be sufficiently large that effective leadership will emerge, but not so large as to make it difficult for citizens to take an active part in the development of the school program; (4) other things being equal, the economic base should be sufficiently broad to permit the financing of needed capital outlay programs and the exercise of local initiative."

---

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

The Conference further recommended that the following considerations be the guides in reorganizing attendance units. "(1) Attendance units should be organized on the basis of surveys of needs and conditions. Reliable survey techniques have been developed and used satisfactorily in securing pertinent data on attendance unit organization. (2) The attendance unit should be large enough to provide at least a teacher per grade where road conditions, distances, and other factors permit. Dawson suggests a minimum enrollment of 240 to 280 pupils of an elementary school center and 210 to 300 for a high school center. (3) Sociological and psychological factors should be taken into consideration in the organization of attendance units, insofar as practicable. (4) Political and school administrative unit boundary lines should not be the controlling factor in organizing satisfactory attendance units. (5) Minimum standards for the operation of the educational program in the attendance unit should be determined by the local school administrative unit in accordance with state laws and regulations in cooperation with state departments of education."

Both of the plans emphasize the importance of developing the reorganized school program around neighborhood and community relationships and trends. Since the chapter on neighborhoods and communities defines these social groups and explicitly describes how they can be delineated, no further treatment of them will be attempted here, except to point out that any plan directed toward school reorganization must recognize that the best method of carrying out consolidation varies widely in accordance with variations among the different type-of-farming and culture regions. And here it is probably sufficient to state one guiding principle, namely, that to accomplish school consolidation and to help develop further the desired school-community relationships, consolidation, or any other plan for reorganization, should be approached as a process and not through straight administration or the passage of some law that makes reorganization compulsory.

Adult and Out-of-School Education

In keeping with our principles of free and universal education for everyone, we are always championing the cause of the open forum, which helps all who wish to participate in a continuous quest for knowledge. Thus education in the United States is a continuous process, covering the entire span of life. We have already touched briefly on the out-of-school adult vocational education program for farmers and older youth. Our purpose now is to describe and analyze one of the largest adult and out-of-school rural educational endeavors in the world, the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service.

This Service, providing education away from the classroom, gives rural people the greatest amount of access to scientific and practical agriculture knowledge along with assistance and encouragement to apply this knowledge under existing conditions. The result is better farming, better living, and better rural communities. For in the United States the Service has for its purpose the extension to rural people of useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, home economics, and general rural welfare. In 1946 a Federal Extension Committee, of which I was a member, broadly defined the scope of the Extension's educational responsibilities as including educational assistance and services in the following major fields: (1) economic policies and public problems; (2) marketing and distribution; (3) social relations, adjustments, and culture values; (4) farm homes and buildings; (5) health; (6) conservation of natural resources; (7) farm and home management; (8) rural organization and leadership development; and (9) agricultural production. The committee responsible for drawing up this farsighted and comprehensive report clearly recognized that it was stating objectives for the future. The area in which the Extension has up to the present served with distinction is that of agricultural production and the development of an intelligent rural leadership. But much constructive work has been done in the matter of conservation, while some states have excelled in their educational work regarding marketing and the construction of rural houses.

Most states have, in fact, worked diligently to help farmers and homemakers apply the findings of science, but it has not been until recently that the emphasis has been placed on unified farm and home planning. Missouri has led the way in this planning under their program widely referred to as "balanced farming." Then too, while nutrition has always been stressed, it is of late being related to health, and a health program designed to aid rural people to secure and fully utilize modern services and facilities is being developed. Except for the start that has been made in family relationships, however, only limited work has been done in the field of social adjustments. Moreover, educational work regarding distribution and consumption is yet to be developed. Very little has been done concerning economic policies and public problems. The fact is that wherever the Extension does operate, it helps rural people to organize, but because the agents are not trained in the social sciences, work in this field has not always been the most effective.

The committee wisely recommended, therefore, that for the future the greatest possible increase in emphasis be placed upon economic problems and public policies, marketing and distribution, certain segments of the field of social relations, adjustments and culture values, farm and home buildings, and health (particularly with respect to helping rural people organize so that they may secure the needed health services and facilities). It was further recommended that some additional emphasis be placed upon farm and home management, and especially upon a unified family approach, upon conservation of natural resources, and upon rural organization and the development of leadership. Since production, as was stated earlier, has traditionally occupied the major portion of the Extension's efforts, the committee also recommended that this phase of the work not receive any relative increase in emphasis as new members are added to the staff. This report, which has been widely discussed and universally accepted, looks to the future in suggesting the need for an over-all and closely integrated Extension educational program based on related needs and problems of rural living. It is a challenge to any group, and a report worthy of careful study now as well as throughout the next twenty years.

Cooperative Agricultural Extension work in the United States, while administratively uniform in all states and counties, varies greatly among the major culture regions in its methods of organization and in the way it works with rural people. For example, the people living in the wheat belt, producing crops that are adapted to that area, have a whole range of living patterns that are adapted to the growing of their major crop. Extension methods in this area must therefore be sensitive to the place of wheat in the culture of the area, and orient farm, home, and community programs to a wheat culture. Likewise, in the corn belt, dairy belt, and other such areas, different adaptations of Extension methods must be made in accordance with the culture of the particular area. Over thirty years of Extension experience has demonstrated that if desirable production changes and higher nutritional standards are to be achieved, it is necessary — in fact, imperative — to work from within the group and in line with the culture patterns of the people. The importance of this — if it is now questionable — cannot be missed after reading the chapters on rural life in the various type-of-farming regions. The importance of Extension's utilizing the cultural approach has been further discussed by M. L. Wilson, Director, Federal Extension Service, and others. Such an approach implies that one must work from within the established groupings, utilizing the local leadership and being fully conscious of the basic social values, the underlying attitudes, and the significant trends. When these things are known, an educational program that helps the people to stake out their life objectives, and that guides them in their realization, can be evolved. It is Extension's job to help the people develop their objectives themselves, as well as to aid in their achievement.

The groups composing the Cooperative Extension Service are the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the state colleges of agriculture, the county government, and the people themselves. The various levels of government share in financing the Extension Service, while rural people share in developing the programs and activities based on local needs. Agricultural Extension, being strictly an educational agency, does not lend money or engage in subject-matter research, police, regulatory, political, or business activities. But it does supply information related to these activities. It tells rural people about the results of research in agriculture and home economics, the government regulations that affect rural people, the sources of available credit, the governmental and nongovernmental programs that are designed to assist rural people, the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods of marketing farm produce, and the numerous other activities that are related to farming, homemaking, and community welfare.

The purpose of the Extension Service, as we have said, is to help rural people improve the conditions that affect their lives. This is done by encouraging and aiding them to analyze their problems, and by determining what they themselves can do about meeting their needs and what help they wish the Extension Service to provide. The rural people are always encouraged to do things for themselves. In 1947 there were 4771 resident agricultural agents, 3316 home county demonstration agents, and 523 county 4-H Club (youth) leaders serving as paid professional advisors. Remember, these are county people only. And their residence in the county assists the county Extension agents to study and understand the problems of the local people. Nearly 1800 technically trained staff members, full and part time workers from state agricultural colleges, keep the resident agents informed and in touch with scientific and technological developments. These specialists visit the counties frequently, helping the agents to analyze problems and work out appropriate educational programs.

Much of the teaching of adult farmers is done through demonstrations or object lessons. For example, when an improved variety of grain is perfected, the county agent works closely with one or two farmers in each of the communities of the county to test it and determine its adaptability to local farming conditions. In order to show results the agent gets the co-operation of the demonstation farmers in dividing their planting, putting part of the field in the new variety and the remainder in the old variety. The farmer and his neighbors are the judges of whether the new variety is superior. If it is, the county agents spread the word through the press and newsletters and in farmer meetings, telling where the new variety can be purchased, and explaining that if it is planted and cared for in keeping with recommendations, it will probably give yields superior to those of present varieties. By similar techniques the Extension Service demonstrates improved methods in soil conservation, cultivation, irrigation, insect control, livestock management, and numerous other farm practices. Over the years the farmers have learned to rely on their Extension agent, for they feel quite confident that his recommendations are sound.

As for rural homemakers, through home-demonstration work they are given the help they need in developing for themselves and their families a satisfactory home and rural life. This assistance is based upon modern scientific research, but its practical value is such that the homemaker can readily adapt the information to problems of daily living. The home demonstration agents in most states are mainly concerned with producing, conserving, and raising nutritional food necessary for good health; making the home comfortable, livable, attractive, and efficient; developing intelligent management of household tasks and household finances; clothing the family in good taste and at minimum costs; understanding the needs and abilities of family members and guiding them in right habits and desirable family

10. Farm women chat across the counter with the grocer

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

11. Children from rural school near by brought to township school for hot lunch

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Forsythe]

Guide
TO GOOD EATING

12. The old-fashioned one-room school still exists in a number of places

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

13. Rural church

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman] relationships; and utilizing all resources of the home, the farm, and the community in providing a satisfactory life for the family. The home agent, like the county agent, relies heavily on the demonstration methods as an effective means of testing and spreading desirable practices.

In addition to working with adult men and women, the Extension Service in the United States carries on a well-rounded program for children and young adults. The 4-H program, for instance, is for boys and girls between the ages of ten and twenty-one. These youngsters have projects that they carry out on their parents' farms and in their homes. A typical farm project would be taking care of poultry, cultivating a garden, or raising a pig or calf, while a typical home project would be making clothes, canning fruits and vegetables, or preparing family meals. And experience indicates that much of the best Extension work is that carried on with these youngsters. Moreover, they become the farmers and homemakers of tomorrow, and have much influence in getting their families to consider and adopt Extension teachings.

The strong link between the county and home agents and the farm people is the voluntary leader. These leaders, becoming interested in improved farm and home practices, make the community a more desirable place in which to live and bring up a family. They take much information to their farmer neighbors, many of whom could not be seen or influenced directly by agents. In 1947 nearly one million voluntary leaders helped carry out Extension-sponsored educational programs in their communities. And it is through these voluntary leaders that the Extension helps rural communities to discover their common problems in such matters as land use, roads, schools, churches, health, recreation, marketing, and conservation. Indeed, Extension education is more and more directed toward helping rural people take appropriate action through their own groups and communities in meeting their problems and needs.

To repeat, in carrying on its educational program, Extension uses many different methods. In 1947, Extension workers made over three and a half million farm and home visits. They wrote and sent to farm families some eight hundred thousand newsletters, made sixty-eight thousand radio broadcasts, and distributed eighteen million copies of bulletins and circulars. Farm people themselves made almost nine million office calls at the county Extension offices. In addition, some fifty-one million people attended meetings, demonstrations, tours, and other Extension-sponsored gatherings. Extension enrolled over one and three-quarters million boys and girls in 4-H clubs, and reached over three million women through homemakers' programs. Altogether over six and a half million families in the forty-eight states, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico received educational assistance in 1947 from the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service.

The Library as an Educational Agency in the Community

In our discussions of the church and the school we emphasized that they functioned best when integrated into the community. We further stated that they were basic social institutions of the community. More and more, people are recognizing that the library too is an institution that is essential to the community. But, unfortunately, with more than six hundred counties having no library facilities within their borders, many rural communities do not at present have a library. In fact, of the thirty-five million people in the United States who do not at present have library service, thirty-two million are rural. Here, then, is another phase of the problem of rural education. For the lack of library services means an unbalanced educational program in rural communities. Educators and community leaders are therefore increasingly stressing the incompleteness of our educational system, and urging the extension of libraries so that they will be available to everyone. Although knowledge and understanding stem from many sources, more often than not, knowledge stems from the written word. Thus, the books provided by libraries become very important.

Moreover, while the basic function of the library is certainly education, one cannot, and should not, lose sight of its function as a social and recreational institution. It is common knowledge that the average of our population is becoming older, that there are more years between retirement and death. These can be productive and busy years, and the library can do much to make them so. Throughout this book it has also been pointed out that agriculture is rapidly being mechanized. Among other things, this means increasing leisure time for farm people. How this leisure time is spent depends upon the opportunities that the community offers. If education is seen as a continuous process, it quickly becomes apparent that the library can help to provide a constructive leisure-time program that will be both educational and recreational.

In the discussion of education and democracy that follows, it is pointed out that the success of our democratic form of government depends in no small part on having an informed and intelligent citizenship. It is taken for granted that the school has the major role to play in the education of our citizenship. But it is not widely recognized that the school merely initiates the process of education, and that to have intelligent citizens means having continuous education. The question has been raised – and it is a pertinent one – of why we spend so much time educating children to read and search for the truth when we fail to provide them with libraries so that they may continue their quest for knowledge once they leave the school. Libraries cost money, but not so much as people generally believe. According to the American Library Association, $1.25 to $1.50 per person per year is the acceptable minimum cost for providing adequate library services to rural communities. In 1941 the United States spent only forty-two cents per capita for public libraries. And some states spent as little as four cents per capita. Only one state, which spent $1.02, approached the minimum standard.

The small neighborhoods, and even many rural communities, will continue to be unable to provide adequate books and competent workers. The communities most in need of library services are, in general, the ones that are struggling hardest to improve their school programs. As has been pointed out in the discussion of schools, these communities must have outside financial assistance if they are to provide library services. Furthermore, it will be necessary to educate rural people to accept taxes in order to support public libraries. And then, just as neighborhoods and smaller communities have had to join together to modernize their educational offerings, so will rural communities have to join together in working out satisfactory ways of obtaining library services, often without having a library building. The American Library Association forcefully says: "The equalization of library opportunities is not bound to happen, but it can be made to happen." Any interested citizen can become a point of leverage for community planning and action through his civic, social, or educational organizations, his labor or farm organization, discussion groups, or the state citizens' library committee. Newspapers and radios can greatly aid this cause. And teamwork can build for the library the kind of public support that a complete system of public education must have.

Education in a Democracy

Whatever progress we have made as a nation is due in no small part to our system of free and universal education. And that we have made great strides in education over the years is not to be denied. It is the future that challenges. If we are to hold before the world our foremost position as the land of opportunity, we must work to provide the best possible schools for all our children, both rural and urban. For they will become the kind of future citizens we educate them to be — that and no more.

American colonists came here in search of freedom, with educational opportunities being very important in their minds. It is significant, however, that not all of those who settled on our shores in the early days were favorable to free education. This was especially true in the case of those who sought only personal power and material gain. But eventually the pattern created in 1642 and 1647 by the New England colonists, who established public schools and ordered that all children should be taught to read and write, prevailed. Significantly enough these dates mark the first time in the history of English-speaking people that the state assumed the responsibility for the education of all children. Since then we have steadfastly held to this cardinal principle of education, which has proven to be a most important cornerstone in the development of our democratic way of life. As was shown earlier, though, many states are finding that their limited resources make them unable to provide educational opportunities and facilities in keeping with the progress of the nation.

Today both personal and professional advancement and security within all walks of life are closely related to educational attainment and demonstrated ability. With respect to agriculture we pride ourselves as being the most mechanized and scientifically advanced country in the world. If this is true — and few would question such a statement — it is so only as a result of the importance we have placed on education. For the widespread application in agriculture of new scientific discoveries and advances is made possible largely because of our universal and compulsory educational system.

Indeed, each day it is more evident that high levels of living and good citizenship are closely associated with educational attainment.

More and more it becomes clear that the democracy we have worked so hard for, and cherish so much, must not be taken for granted. And citizenship in a democracy is more than exercising one's privileges at the polls. It means being intelligent about issues of the day, and helping others to obtain the facts out of which attitudes crystallize and programs of action evolve. It is true that through our free press, the ever expanding radio networks, formal and informal group meetings, and other educational channels, people are being brought face to face with the issues of the day. But in order that all people will be mentally prepared to analyze the increasingly complex society in which they live, the school and the Cooperative Extension Service have a responsibility that has never before confronted any institution or agency.

The Schools and the Community

The rural school along with the church and the family constitute the basic social institutions of the rural community. And in the rural community, more than in the urban, the school is increasingly becoming the natural center, not only for educational programs, but for many social activities as well.

In the early settlement of this country neighboring farmers co-operated to establish conveniently located schools for their children. Throughout most of the nation these neighborhood institutions are still one- and two-teacher units. In accordance with the principle that a school be within easy walking distance for all rural children except toddlers, the little "red school by the side of the road" still dots our landscape. But now, as a result of the many technological advancements in agriculture, industry, transportation, and communication, the once self-sufficient neighborhood and even the smaller communities are merging with adjacent neighborhoods, and are thus becoming more capable of providing the wide range of services needed and demanded by rural people. This change has been fully discussed in the chapter on neighborhoods and communities. In many sections of the country the school is leading the way in this movement towards consolidation, which is in turn hastening the development of larger trade-centered communities. Thus, community studies made in all sections of the country point to the school as being the greatest potential force in creating a "we" feeling, and in furnishing the dynamics for strong, vital, and co-ordinated community programs.

It would be a mistake to leave the impression that all efforts towards consolidation make for community integration. In fact, in many, many cases disorganization and community conflict have resulted from school reorganization. This happens when those giving leadership to the movement fail to recognize the importance of neighborhood and community relationships. I have personally visited many communities in which consolidation has been rejected by the citizens. Often the failures or the rejections by popular vote have been due to the way in which the proposals for consolidation and the methods for achieving it were presented to the people. This can best be illustrated by taking two communities, which I visited, and describing the steps that were followed in presenting the proposal to each community. In one community the plan was accepted on first vote. In the other, the proposal was overwhelmingly rejected, even on the second vote.

In the Spring Valley community, which accepted consolidation the first time it came up for vote, the superintendent acted in the capacity of community leader. He saw and understood the importance of the neighborhood. He recognized that the community was united for trade and to some extent for recreation. It was actually a community consisting of neighborhoods clustered about the village center. The stronger "we" feeling was in relation to the neighborhood, not the community. There was still considerable social distance between farm and village people, with the farmers feeling ill at ease at meetings dominated by the village. The superintendent discussed consolidation informally with the board, and with leading citizens. He knew of their interest and their concern. His first move was to suggest that the president of the board accompany him to a near-by community that had recently consolidated. This visit proved very important, because the board president became an enthusiastic supporter for consolidation, thus putting the leadership of the movement in the hands of a resident and highly respected community leader. Then the educational campaign for consolidation was carefully developed within the community. It had none of the marks of pressure. Once there was active interest the board gave leadership to a community survey. They mapped the community area to find out how many children were in the area that enclosed some semblance of community feeling. This first survey showed that the population base in this area was adequate to support a consolidated school. The survey next turned to a study of each neighborhood that had a school. Here the emphasis was placed on attendance, population trends, and cost, while the attitudes toward education, and in particular toward consolidation, were noted. Having obtained the facts, and having a specific set of objectives in regard to what consolidation could mean to the people, a community-wide educational program was launched to improve facilities and secure better qualified teachers. Each neighborhood was approached as a social unit, thus helping the people as a group to think the issue through to their satisfaction. When it came time to vote, which was some two years after the inception of the idea, the vote was overwhelmingly favorable, and the area emerged a united community.

In the Wesley community, which rejected consolidation, the school superintendent decided that the schools should be consolidated, and he assumed active leadership for the movement. He failed to take account of the fact that the neighborhoods with schools were in themselves closely knit social groups. Furthermore, they had some feeling of hostility toward the center that wanted the consolidated school. No careful survey was made to determine the extent of community area, the importance of neighborhoods, or the population and general community trends. Furthermore, no one within the immediate community other than the superintendent rose to champion and give leadership to the consolidation movement. The result was that the more the superintendent talked consolidation the more the neighborhoods opposed it, even in the face of increasing difficulties in providing satisfactory schools for their children. Twice during the five years the superintendent lived in the community the citizens voted on and rejected the proposal for consolidation. The community came through this experience with much distrust for its leadership, and is today a community "divided against itself."

As was discussed earlier, educational leaders are increasingly emphasizing the importance of understanding community-neighborhood relations and trends in the development of school programs. And in the chapter on neighborhoods and communities it was pointed out that two states (New York and Kansas), in passing legislation providing for school consolidation, stressed the importance of recognizing the functioning communities as the basic area for school consolidation. For these states, as well as others, recognize that the school performs its function when it is truly a part of the community, and that school-community relationships are not created through legislation, but must evolve out of wholesome, friendly attitudes. Moreover, when the school becomes so large that it reaches out and serves more than the area to which people express a feeling of belonging, the family-school relationships fade out. When the school area is too small in terms of both taxable resources and a population base that can provide the modern facilities and services most needed, consolidation is probably not the answer. Such problems as these are being met through the establishment of administrative areas, which has been discussed. To summarize briefly, the administrative area recognizes community relationships and groups, together with those areas that have a certain minimum of mutual interest. Whether or not the school buildings are left within all the neighborhoods and the communities comprising the administrative area depends on the size of the area, and on how the educational interest of the area can best be served.

Since the majority of schools are primarily neighborhood and community institutions under the control of locally elected boards, there is great variation in community school programs and in the relationship of the school to the community. Some rural communities in the United States can boast of excellent schools, but many have some of the poorest schools in the nation. While economic resources, or the lack of them, explain part of the differences, probably one of the major explanations lies in the attitude of the community itself toward education. The extremes range from communities that insist that the school should concern itself first and last with teaching the "three R's," to those that believe that the school should be sensitive, alert, and responsive to all community and educational needs in training children for useful citizenship, and should also aid the total community in being intelligent and in possessing leadership capable of meeting its needs. While the original emphasis of schools was on classroom instruction, a well-established trend shows the school emerging as a powerful community force, giving more and more attention to the improvement of both the cultural and economic life of all the people who live in the community.

For proof that the school tends to serve the function defined by any community, we have only to understand the basic social values of the people in that community. Thus, where education is highly esteemed in the total value system, the community sees to it that the best education is provided. It may do this by increasing taxes in order to provide modern buildings, and by employing a competent staff. Where there are economic limitations and a decreasing population, school consolidation may be the answer if that will mean greater educational opportunities for the children. Furthermore, it is by community demand and sanction that the scope of the school program is largely determined. For example, communities of equal economic resources vary greatly in the interest they take in their schools. To put it another way, communities vary greatly with respect to the way they want the school to express its interest in community affairs. Thus, in one community the school may sponsor a wide range of recreational programs designed to meet the interests of out-of-school youth and of adults; another community turns "thumbs down" on out-of-school recreation. One community encourages vocational guidance; another does little in this field. One community provides vocational and home economics departments; another community does not see the importance of such specialized training.

It is significant that while we generally accredit the South with having the poorest schools of the country, the South also has some of the nation's best and most progressive schools. For while there are many reasons for variations within a region (economic resources being one), the will of the people and the value they place on education are probably of greater importance. In fact, a more careful analysis of these progressive school-community programs reveals that the community's achievement has been due in no small part to at least one leader who had a vision and the will to see the community lift itself educationally, which in turn has meant social and economic advancement for all. Usually these leaders have been lifelong residents who have stayed in the community long enough to see their inspired ideas and ideals emerge into realities. On the other side of the ledger, one finds that communities having poor schools generally lack inspired, forward-looking leadership, and that the community is inclined to find little fault with its schools. In general, the school becomes what the community determines and wishes it to become, for in the final analysis, the school and its program are institutionalized in the culture of the community. Perhaps, therefore, attacking the rural school and urging its improvement are the wrong approaches in trying to improve rural schools and rural education. For if the thesis just presented — that the school is an institution of the community — is correct, then one way to get better schools is to aid and give leadership to the development of strong vital communities. In any event, the two are inseparable, and must therefore be approached as one. Today no community can become much of a force without a strong school, and no school can advance very far without the backing and support of the community.

CHAPTER 7

THE RURAL CHURCH AND RELIGION

BY DOUGLAS ENSMINGER

What Are the Rural Church Problems?

Dr. C. J. Galpin, formerly head of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, once wrote: "It is the small, weak, pastorless church, poorly located, which tends to surrender agriculture to destructive individualism. It is the strong church, with noble permanent architecture, properly located, with a capable resident pastor, that unifies agriculture; a unified agriculture in turn unifies the church. How to produce these greatly desired aims in the future development of the rural church without diminishing in any wise the religious aims and objectives of the churches themselves is the aspect of the rural church situation which is presented to agriculture as a problem."

The open-country and hamlet churches were the earliest, and for years the most important, churches in this country. While it is conceded by many that they should be replaced in most parts of the country by strong, well-staffed community or village-centered churches, they still persist in thousands of neighborhoods. And yet, rural leaders today view with alarm the continued decline in both the number and the influence of open-country churches. For such changes as the increase of transportation services and facilities, the decrease of the rural population, and the expansion of the interest of the people beyond their neighborhoods are making it increasingly difficult for the open-country church to survive. Studies made by Edmund de S. Brunner showed that between 1930 and 1936 there was a net decrease of 3.4 per cent in the number of open-country churches. And there is every reason to believe that this trend has been accelerated during recent years. Community studies made during the war by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics revealed that the rural church was then temporarily recovering, or at least holding its own, in regard to finances and attendance. But an analysis of general rural trends indicates that with the stepping up of school consolidation and the consequent closing of neighborhood schools, the open-country church will be further threatened, since another neighborhood interest will be transferred to the village. Brunner's studies of trends also revealed another tangible indication of the decline of the open-country church. For they showed a decrease in the proportion of small churches that have less than fifty members, and an increase in the proportion of larger churches that have two hundred or more members. And we can be fairly certain that the majority of those having less than fifty members were open-country and hamlet churches.

The present strongholds of the open-country churches are in the more stable farming neighborhoods, where the majority of farms are owner-operated and population shifts are at a minimum. Some neighborhoods of common cultural heritage also tend to support the church strongly. A number of students of rural life have pointed out that the open-country church tends to be strong in areas where family security, rather than education, is the dominant value. In such areas family security expresses itself in farm ownership and in the desire to keep the young men in agriculture. And it is in such areas that there are most likely to be people who place a high value on the neighborhood church and who therefore support it to the limit of their ability.

As we have said, the tendency is to view with alarm the continued closing of the open-country church. And it is argued that this trend indicates a lessening of interest in religion. Interestingly enough, the same trend is also occurring with the rural school, for the one-room school is rapidly disappearing from the landscape. But in the case of schools, consolidation is being encouraged by state and national educational leaders, and it is being presented to the people on the theory that the neighborhood school cannot possibly provide the type of educational instruction that is needed and to which rural people are entitled. Whereas in the case of churches, while denominational leaders are agreed that many weak churches should be closed and united with other churches in the community, they are not as yet organized to get effective action. The tendency, therefore, is for the church to delay change until it becomes weak and ineffective and eventually dies because of vanished interest and support. Thomas A. Tripp, of the Congregational Boards, in summing up this decline of the open-country church, writes: "One may say that the closing of the open-country churches is not a matter of great alarm, but the weakness of some of them, the wasteful competition of others and the neglect of neighboring unchurched farmers by village parishes should concern Christians everywhere." And he concludes by saying: "There is an urgent need for a constructive program on behalf of crossroad churches in order that none shall die which should live and an earnest effort to make those which flourish more effective."

In discussing the decline of the open-country church, Tripp has analyzed the situation as follows: "Due to modern developments the crossroads church, like the country store and district school, follows the village-ward trend. However, the church is the last of the three to die out in the farm neighborhood. The most disturbing factor in the situation is that when the church goes to town, it does not take its constituency with it to nearly as high degree as other institutions. Hence many farmers are left without religious services. Furthermore, weakened country churches, especially those on circuits and those which for various reasons have a part-time or poorly prepared ministry, are not doing very efficient work as compared to town or city parishes."

The above analysis is not to infer that the neighborhood churches would not be missed if they were suddenly to close. For in many neighborhoods the open-country church serves the people well, and will continue to do so for years to come. This is especially true in the South, where many people are still limited in their means of transportation. And to many the church, along with the school, represents the major interest outside of the family. But the facts overwhelmingly support the conclusion that there are too many Protestant churches. To be sure, the trend is toward the closing of the open-country churches and the consolidation of the present village-centered ones. While the Protestant leaders are agreed that it is necessary to speed up this trend, for the most part they seem pretty helpless to do much to assist.

The obstacles retarding church consolidation are denominationalism, local sentiment, lack of strong leadership among the local clergy, and failure on the part of community-minded citizens to take a hand. For so long as denominational boards reach out to help keep alive the churches that should join with others in providing a vital religious program to the community, there will not be much change in the present situation. Moreover, denominationalism is still stressed from the local pulpits, and aging members are reluctant to change. The seminaries are inclined in their training to overemphasize denominationalism at the sacrifice of religious leadership. Certainly there is much evidence pointing to the willingness, if not eagerness, of the young rural leaders to seek change. But, as will be discussed later, the rural church now often gets poorly equipped professional leadership.

With the meager salaries available, the open-country churches are finding it increasingly difficult to secure competently trained ministers. Thus, as far as the rural minister is concerned, the open-country church is becoming the undesirable stepchild. In facing the future, therefore, the open-country church must not expect too much attention and support from the competent pastors. For since there is a shortage of well-trained pastors, they, like the school teachers, are bid for on the open market, and are usually secured by the villages. Moreover, the Protestant rural clergy are poorly trained, in terms of both formal schooling and preparation for rural leadership. One might ask what can be expected when as a group they are most inadequately paid. Indeed, the Baptist state convention in North Carolina reported that a survey made in 1941 revealed pastors' salaries ranging from $122 for the smaller churches to $774 for churches with more than five hundred members. At the same time, village churches paid from $214 to $1,578, and the town and city church salaries ranged from $208 to $3,728.

The most recent available data on salaries of ministers is contained in the 1940 census of the labor force. Reporting the incomes of 135,090 male clergy, both rural and urban, it revealed that of the 96.5 per cent reporting, 55.1 per cent received less than $1,199. And one can be fairly sure that the bulk of those falling in this salary group were from villages and the open country. As for regional differences, they are about what would be expected. In the South 62.0 per cent of the clergy received less than $1,199 in 1940, whereas in the North only 50.7 per cent were in so low a bracket. The percentage in the West (57.1) was comparable to the average percentage for the United States as a whole. It should be noted, however, that this is a cash salary and does not include rent-free parsonage and supplementary income. Many rural clergy are part-time pastors, for they simply cannot support their families on the little money that many churches pay, or can afford to pay, them. Thus, the smaller churches have fewer full-time resident pastors, and a high percentage must be content with only a part-time minister. The Roman Catholic priest has an average income of $1,200 and a rectory. In comparison with the Protestant clergy, the Catholic priest fares much better financially, for, being single, his obligations are much more limited.

The result of this low salary scale is threefold. In the first place the more competent and better-trained pastors look upon the rural church as a place in which to start and to leave as soon as possible. The desire for security, as well as increasing family responsibilities, makes it necessary for them to go where the higher salaries are paid, and salaries rise as they progress from the open country to the hamlet to the village, and finally, to the city church. The second result of this low salary scale is that many promising young men who are inspired to dedicate their lives to Christian leadership redirect their interest into closely allied services. Third and last, the rural church is exhibiting all its weakness because of inadequate leadership. For since the rural church is no longer equal to the position of community leadership that tradition has placed upon it, people are turning their backs on the church. In discussing the decline of the Congregational Christian Church in the Southeast, Tripp concludes that the "steady decline in the ability of the church to win members indicates the possibility that the churches are inclined to use methods which are no longer effective."

Financing the rural church presents a very great problem to the average congregation. Indeed, were it not for the organized women's groups and the financial help derived from the affiliated denominational bodies, many rural churches simply could not survive. That the average community is spending substantial sums for the church is best revealed in Brunner's village studies, which show that in 1930 the average village-centered community spent $16,000 annually for its churches. But in 1936 the amount dropped to $10,300. Of more significance is the fact that an increasing financial load is falling on the shoulders of the few faithfuls. This is graphically illustrated in William G. Mather's New York study. Moreover, an increasing number of churches are sustained by the financial assistance of the affiliated denominational body. While some rural communities lack economic resources sufficient to support all the basic social institutions, others are unwilling to support an institution that no longer meets a need or that does not meet it as well as do more vital community-centered institutions. It seems quite clear, then, that the financial support the church can expect in the future will be dependent upon a more vital service. In line with this, it is significant that community studies made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics during the war indicated that churches were at that time finding it easier to raise money, and that church budgets were up.

Brunner's studies showed that in 1930 the average cost of operating a village church was $2,238, which representeed a 28.5 per cent increase over 1920 costs. Accepting the Protestant's standard of one church for every thousand persons, we should have one third fewer churches. And assuming that the present contributions for the support of the village church could be continued, there would be close to $7,000 with which to staff and operate that church. While some are now giving to the limit of their ability, if not even beyond, in order to support the church because they do not wish to lose it, others not now contributing might become interested if the church had stronger ministerial leadership and concerned itself with developing a vital Christian community.

Moreover, with a continuing decline in the rural population, especially in the Plains, the Middle West, and the South, the financial load on those who remain becomes increasingly heavy. Brunner's village studies show that between 1920 and 1930 the cost of operating open-country churches increased 18.5 per cent. This means that for some neighborhoods, especially those which are losing population, the percentage of increase per contribution has been even more. With the decreasing population base and the increasing cost per capita for those who support the church, it is not too difficult to see that the financial load alone will cause many churches to fail. To be sure, the older generation of farmers are more inclined to make financial sacrifices in order to keep the church, more often than not for purely sentimental reasons. But the younger generation of farmers will probably not be so ready to contribute a disproportionate amount of their income in order to do so.

Membership is one index of church vitality. The most reliable consolidated figures on church membership for any one year are those in the 1926 United States Census of Religious Bodies, which showed that the average rural church had 98 members. Granting that the 1936 Census of Religious Bodies is not too reliable, it does nevertheless aid in revealing trends. And in 1936 the average membership of village and open-country churches was 171 and 93 respectively. This represented an increase of 23 since 1924 for the village churches, and an increase of 7 for the open-country churches.

It is of some interest to see what changes in the number of churches and in membership occurred between 1926 and 1936. Except for the Missouri Synod Lutheran, which increased by one per cent, all of the twelve leading denominations showed a decrease during that period in the number of rural churches. The range of decrease was from 7 per cent for the Roman Catholic to 33 per cent for the Friends. Moreover, all except the Missouri Synod Lutheran and the Church of the Brethren showed a loss in rural church membership. And the range of church membership changes varied from a gain of 5 per cent for the Missouri Synod Lutheran and the Church of the Brethren, to a loss of 32 per cent for the Disciples of Christ.

In fact, all church and community studies that have touched upon the church during recent years support the evidence of a trend toward fewer rural churches and a decreasing church membership.

It is obvious that as the weaker open-country churches close, the membership of the village church will, on the other hand, continue to increase, and this is precisely what the available data reveal. But since there is a lag in members from the closed open-country churches affiliating with village churches, the percentage of the total population who claim church membership is continuously declining.

Attendance is probably a better index of church vitality. Since in principle the church serves the religious needs of all the people who live within its immediate area, it is of interest to note that, as Brunner found in his village studies, when attendance was computed on the basis of total population there was a decline of 20 per cent between 1924 and 1936. And in examining the attendance of members, Brunner found that the average monthly attendance per church member declined from 3.9 visits in 1924 to 2.8 visits in 1936. While a Bureau of Agricultural Economics study of the thirty-five white churches in Culpeper County, Virginia, showed that in 1940 only 24.9 per cent of the total white population were attending preaching services each Sunday.

Church leaders place great stress on Sunday-school attendance, and it is proper that they should, for the Sunday school is the feeder for the church. And Sunday-school attendance is, in general, an indication of the interest of young people in the church and its activities. But the Culpeper, Virginia, study just referred to showed that in 1940 approximately three fourths of the total white population were not enrolled in Sunday school, that more than one half of the Sunday-school enrollment did not attend service, and that seven eighths of the total white population were not in Sunday school each Sunday morning. In addition, Tripp's studies of Congregational churches show a declining attendance at Sunday school. He found that Sunday-school enrollment in the Intermountain District declined 38.2 per cent between 1920 and 1940. Similarly, Sunday-school enrollment in the Southeast decreased 30.1 per cent during that period. Thus, whenever church people come together to consider their problems, the decreasing attendance at preaching, Sunday school, and youth activities always come up for discussion. These problems are of great concern to the local clergy. The studies of wartime changes made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in eight widely scattered communities revealed that with gasoline rationing and the emotional tensions created by the war, the rural churches were, if anything, gaining ground in attendance. It seems safe to conclude, however, that this was merely a temporary arresting of a well-established trend, and that further declines in church attendance may be expected until church programs and leadership more adequately meet present-day needs.

It is not at all uncommon in the larger village-centered communities to find that several churches cater to families that have different levels of living and that are in different tenure positions and occupational groupings. When class differences are pronounced and become major determinants in all the patterns of social participation in the community, there is a tendency for various emotional, fundamentalist sects, to develop – sects largely composed of the poorer people, both farm and village, who do not fit in with the leading Protestant denominations. These same people are also generally nonparticipants in most, if not all, of the formally organized groups in the community. The Roman Catholic Church has demonstrated that social differentiation is unnecessary, however, for where the Catholic Church exists, it serves all status groups within a given geographic area.

It is primarily in the case of the village church that we find the greatest church conflict. Most rural communities with more than one church have resources and a population base that are adequate to support only one. Indeed, it is estimated that today there is one church for approximately every three hundred persons. Whereas denominational leaders in the Home Mission Council say that to have strong churches the ratio should be one church for every thousand persons. In any event, community studies definitely demonstrate that communities with too many churches are likely to develop conflicts that greatly affect the entire community, including its educational and recreational programs. In most of the communities that have two or more churches in conflict with each other, the conclusion is inescapable: these churches are both an economic and a social burden to the community. They are an economic burden because, as is traditional, only a small percentage of the people in any community contribute to the church budget, and in most rural communities the contributions are further limited by farm income and other rural occupations. They are a social burden because they create conflict and divide the community, and therefore do not hold before the people high Christian principles of co-operation. Most rural communities could be provided with more adequate and more competently headed religious and social centers if they were to pool the resources now being expended for weak churches and ill-trained pastoral leaders.

Studies of the city churches that serve the suburban farmers have not concerned themselves with the relationship of the rural participants. But the fact that the suburban farmer is increasingly participating in the educational, recreational, and other social and economic services of the city is now common knowledge. Since for the farmer religious worship has through the years been a warm, friendly experience carried on co-operatively with friends and neighbors, the main question seems to be whether the farmer and his family will be welcomed in the city church, and whether he will have an opportunity to express his ideas in forms of religious worship. It is now established that, in contrast to the ups and downs experienced by the open-country and village church, the city church remains relatively stable and continues to grow. Lowry Nelson's report of 1946 on the churches of Red Wing, Minnesota, a community of 10,000 population, showed that for all the eight churches that reported in both 1940 and 1945, some increase in membership was indicated. This increase amounted to 19 per cent. Of the five churches reporting in 1942, 12.6 per cent of the total church membership was from the open country.

Unfortunately Protestant churches lack ways and means of obtaining united action. It is generally understood that once the Roman Catholic

Church decides that a program is good and should be extended, there are established channels through which the local priest is given authority to try it. But in the Protestant Church there is no clear-cut line of authority. A few denominations have hierarchal organizations, but generally these lack authority. With 256 different religious bodies (according to the 1936 Census of Religious Bodies), the Protestants are united organizationally mainly by denominational affiliation and by rather loose democratic leadership. This means that the national denominational leaders may agree wholeheartedly on what needs to be done and on how it should be done by the local churches. But the truth of the matter is that it is a long way from these leaders to the rural church, and there is no clear path of communication or method of obtaining acceptance of the new ideas. The result is that it takes years for new ideas to percolate down, while many simply fall by the wayside, for supervision is lacking and local leadership is inferior.

As proof of this one has only to go back through the literature and find out what denominational and rural leaders were saying about the rural church after World War I. And one could change the dates and reprint many of these statements today. For the problems, just about as they were then defined, are still present. This is a result, in part, of the absence of coordinated leadership, of ineffective channels of communication, and of little or no supervision over the rural church.

In order to analyze the rural church adequately, comparative church data are necessary. But recent statistical data of national scope are not available on the number of churches according to location (that is, whether in open country, hamlets, or villages), on membership, attendance, the number having full-time pastors, church finances, and other related matters. This is due to the fact that the 1936 Census of Religious Bodies did not yield complete and reliable data. Besides this deficiency of national data there has been a noticeable lack of systematic studies of the rural church during the past ten years. The last study that permits national generalizations was the one completed in 1936 by Brunner in his resurvey of 141 agricultural villages. That there should be no adequate data on the rural church is indeed surprising, particularly since between 1910 and 1930 more research studies and a greater number of analyses were made of the rural church situation than had ever been undertaken on any rural social institution. This earlier research was prompted partly by a recognition of the fact that the adjustment of churches as neighborhood institutions to a rapidly changing rural society was slow, and that churches were closing by the thousands. In recent years, too, denominational leaders have urged greater church co-operation and have encouraged all interested researchers to join them in systematic analyses of the rural church.

Lack of a church program is a problem in many communities. For in many areas that have both adequate population and financial resources, the church is nevertheless struggling for existence. A careful analysis of such churches reveals that in general the church program, if indeed one exists, has limited appeal. In general, such communities assume they have met their responsibility when they have employed a pastor, delegating to him the responsibility for running the church. Not infrequently the pastor assumes that he has a program, and indeed he may, but if it is not the community's program there is still no program. If the church is to regain its position within the community the time has come for program planning. These programs should be arranged in accordance with democratic techniques of community planning, whereby all who are interested, young and old, farm and nonfarm, must be brought into participation.

Significant Rural Church Developments

The discussion of some of the problems that face the rural church may leave one wondering about its future. Therefore this consideration of the church now turns to an analysis of a few of the more significant developments that have taken place. For there are a number of plans for church reorganization which have promise.

One widely publicized plan for organizing the churches within a community is that of the larger parish. This plan involves bringing together on a purely voluntary basis all the churches within a given area for the purpose of pooling their resources and placing the professional leadership for their religious programs in the hands of a central staff. It is the job of the central staff, working through the local leadership of each church, to serve the religious needs of each within the limits of the staff and the available resources. Another plan, that of the group ministry, is very comparable to the larger parish plan. In discussing it, A. H. Rapking says:

> Too large a percentage of ministers now think they have fulfilled their mission if they preach, visit the sick, bury the dead, baptize the children, and perform an occasional marriage ceremony.
>
> The ideal situation would be for the Bishop and cabinet to choose a group of ministers for a natural area with the understanding that they cooperate in meeting the needs of the area. While they would, of course, do the work of their charges, they would also work with the other ministers in the redemption of the total life of the area.
>
> One minister in the group may be strong in evangelism, another in working with young people, another in Christian education. Meeting every two weeks, with a map and survey of the area before them, they would study, pray, and plan to promote projects, and grapple with the problems before them.

The merging of several weak churches into one community or federated church has been going on for years. While change through such a voluntary plan is slow, it is encouraging to note that it has the support of the leading denominations. And of all the plans so far devised, this one is making the greatest progress in reducing the number of competing churches.

Under the general heading of "community" church there are three main types: the nondenominational church, the federated church, and the denominational united, or federated, church. A nondenominational church has no denominational affiliation, but it does have a religious condition for membership. A federated church is created by bringing together two or more churches of different denominations, with each retaining its own denominational body. Under this plan the churches work together in calling and paying a pastor, in worshipping, and generally in conducting Sunday school. A denominational united church is a single denominational body that assumes responsibility for other denominational members or groups. "Members received from other than the official body are not required to surrender creed, form of baptism, or denominational loyalty." Because of the strength of denominationalism in this country, the denominational united church would seem to offer much hope as a way to hasten church affiliation in rural America.

In highlighting the problem of poorly paid and inadequately trained clergymen, it is enough to say that much is being done, although slowly, to meet this situation. Since more than half of the rural youth continue to go to urban centers to seek their life's occupation, urban churches are being appealed to for aid in subsidizing the rural salaries for clergymen so that they will be more equal to urban salaries. Denominational leaders view the problem as being somewhat comparable to that in the field of education, in that here, too, rural areas cannot now carry the financial burden alone in providing educational opportunities comparable to those provided in the city. But the ways of meeting the problem are vastly different in the two fields. In education it is met partly through equalization of tax funds. The church, being separate from the state, and its membership, attendance, and contributions being voluntary, can only send out an appeal to join in a right and just cause. And so far, ways and means have not been found to make this a national movement. It is simply in the talk stage, except for a few enlightened city congregations that, looking forward in their own self-interest to receiving future members who will have been trained in youth in vitalized rural churches, are enthusiastically supporting the rural church programs sponsored by their denomination.

For results in the years immediately ahead probably one of the best organized movements for on-job training of rural pastors is the short course, or in-service training institute, sponsored by the colleges of agriculture. And each year an increasing number of colleges and universities sponsor institutes for rural pastors. With the popularity of these training programs, it seems fair to predict that they will soon be a regular part of almost all university institute programs.

In the late 1930's a committee composed of members of the theological seminaries and the colleges of agriculture recommended that the college of agriculture arrange necessary courses for a "pretheological major." And by September 1941, twenty-one colleges had agreed to co-operate. During the war not much was done to push this program, but it will probably pick up momentum in the immediate future. Furthermore, by establishing rural departments a few theological seminaries have also taken positive action designed to train rural ministers more adequately.

Meanwhile, the denominational bodies, both Catholics and Protestants, are developing positive programs for rural church improvement. Probably the most comprehensive such program developed to date is the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. This Conference is almost certain to be far-reaching and increasingly important. In terms of the total population the Catholic Church is predominantly urban, for 80 per cent of its members come from cities, 10 per cent are rural-nonfarm, and 10 per cent are rural-farm. In terms of the total number of churches, however, the larger percentage are located in rural areas. For of a total of some 15,000 Roman Catholic Churches, 8,000 are rural.

The Catholic Rural Life program is directed, in both point of view and emphasis, by the Catholic Rural Life Conference, which dates back to 1923, when Father Edwin V. O'Hara called together in St. Louis a group of Catholic rural leaders for the first National Catholic Rural Conference. This group saw in rural living the last stronghold of the family. They also recognized the persistence of the population shift from rural to urban areas, and therefore felt an urgent need to increase the 10 per cent of the Catholics who lived on the land in order to insure the future numerical strength of the church. Over the years a four-point program has evolved to: (1) care for the underprivileged Catholics living on the land, (2) keep on the land Catholics who now live there, (3) increase the number of Catholics living on the land, and (4) convert the non-Catholics who live on the land.

In line with their objectives the Conference also felt early in their history that through credit unions and co-operatives it would be possible to create a more stable credit structure. Accordingly the 1926 program sought to educate priests in credit-union procedures. And in 1935 the Conference centered on co-operatives, paying particular attention to the Antigonish (Nova Scotia) co-operative movement. The interest in co-operatives was further advanced by the appointment of a special co-operative committee in 1937. Already results are evident, for many credit unions and co-operatives were formed which have contributed to improved living standards.

The Conference early recognized, too, that somehow the attitude of the priest had to be changed. He had to begin thinking in rural terms. To accomplish this the Diocesan Directors of Rural Life was established in 1932, with the permission of the hierarchy. These priests brought the program of the national organization to the diocesan. During the following years various methods were employed to interest the priest in the movement. Study clubs were organized, and intensive training programs were conducted. As was to be expected, they soon discovered that they needed to start in the seminaries. But progress here has been slow, for as of 1945 only fifteen of the country's ninety-nine seminaries offer regular study clubs of rural life. As a further aid in the Conference's educational program, an official publication was established, which is now known as the *Land and Home.*

The Conference leaders strongly emphasize that the program is not designed to promote a back-to-the-land movement. They have accepted the fact that over the years an average of at least fifty per cent of the youth migrate to the cities. To increase the number of Catholics living on the land they are urging and aiding Catholic farm youth to stay on the farm. In stressing this phase of their program they are running head-on into the urban-minded and -trained religious brothers and sisters who are teaching in rural areas. These teachers have not seen the opportunities offered by agriculture, and have been inclined to stimulate the more capable youth to seek opportunities outside that field. As an aid in changing this point of view, and hoping to correct much of the present false philosophy about rural life, the Conference is urging the Catholic institutions of higher learning to introduce courses in rural sociology.

The Conference also strongly urges the local sisters and priests who have contact with agriculture to co-operate in organizing 4-H clubs, and to work closely with the agricultural agencies, particularly with the county agent. Since the Conference recognizes that good farmers, especially those who are satisfied with their lot, are the ones most likely to remain on the land, their program seeks to give all possible help in improving the efficiency and satisfactions of farming.

Moreover, the Catholic Rural Conference makes clear that they plan to push their program into non-Catholic communities. In fact, in their 1927 convention much time was devoted to ways and means of converting non-Catholics. At present the Conference is under the capable leadership of Monsignor Luigi Ligutti, who was appointed full-time Executive Secretary in 1941. In summarizing its activities over the past twenty-three years, the Conference feels that it has been successful in changing attitudes, in creating interest, and in laying the foundation of a really aggressive program for the future.

To consider Protestant efforts toward improving the rural church, the Committee on Town and Country Churches has as its major objective the co-ordination of Protestant church leadership. It is hoped that this will facilitate the development and carrying out of a much needed revitalized rural church program designed to aid the rural church in assuming a strong position of religious leadership in our rapidly changing rural society. While the Committee on Town and Country Churches dates back to 1912, when it was first organized by the Home Missions Council of North America, it did not become a dynamic force until recent years. At present it consists of a joint committee under the sponsorship of the Home Missions Council of North America, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and the International Council of Religious Education.

In 1943 the Committee took on new life. For the first time it operated with a budget and a staff organized to aid in the carrying out of programs. Dr. Benson Y. Landis now serves as the Committee's Executive Secretary. Like the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the Committee on Town and Country Churches has a far-reaching program, the major pillars of which are: (1) discovering and developing the personal potentialities of the farmer and his family, (2) building a strongly integrated Christian community, (3) awakening in farmers a sense of responsibility for preservation of the soil, (4) encouraging the maintenance of the family-sized farm, (5) improving living conditions on farms, and (6) promoting co-operation and co-operatives.

In carrying out its program the Committee has urged that the major denominations that have a high proportion of rural membership employ full-time executive secretaries. Thus each denomination will be in a better position to follow through in changing attitudes of the clergy, and to give supervisory and counseling assistance in getting the local rural churches to engage actively in the vital rural life program. Already thirteen denominations have employed such rural secretaries. The Committee has also sponsored a number of successful regional conferences on land tenure and the church. It is the hope of the Committee that these regional conferences will give rise to others on state, and even community, levels, for the Committee believes that it is necessary for the population of the community to be more stabilized if the church is to survive. Certainly community and church studies suggest that as tenancy and absentee landlordism increase, the church declines in membership, attendance, and influence.

One of the big problems that faces the rural church is, as we have said, that the average rural community has far too many churches. The Committee on Town and Country recognizes this situation and hopefully expects to encourage greater church co-operation and the consolidation of churches where it is apparent that the community resources cannot support the present setup. At present, local church co-operation is being achieved through federated churches, community churches, affiliated churches, the larger parish, and effective community organization.

The Committee also recognizes that if its broad objectives are ever to be achieved, it is the local clergyman who is the key person. As has been pointed out earlier in our discussion, the seminaries have not been training men for the rural ministry, and a large percentage of those now engaged in the ministry do not possess the vision necessary to develop a comprehensive church and community program. To meet this situation the Committee on Town and Country urged the land-grant colleges to co-operate in providing workshops and institutes for rural pastors. The response to this suggestion has been overwhelmingly favorable, both from the colleges and from the pastors who have attended. Also, as has been mentioned, the land-grant colleges are establishing a pretheological training program for young men who are planning to enter the ministry. Seminaries too are rallying to the cause, and are establishing rural departments as well as adding basic courses in rural sociology.

The one big problem that faces the Committee in its efforts to achieve its broad objective is the salary differential between rural and urban pastors. And until some solution to this is worked out, it seems certain that the more capable rural pastors will find it impossible to make the personal sacrifice that is necessary if they are to remain in the community long enough to develop new attitudes about the place and function of the church in a modern rural community and to help evolve a far-reaching community program.

While the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and the Committee on Town and Country Churches started as two independent church movements, it is probably correct to assume that the present force with which they are moving is due in no small part to the focus that was brought to bear on rural life problems, and to the discussions that were started earlier by the American Country Life Conference. This Conference had its first meeting in 1919 under the chairmanship of Kenyon L. Butterfield. During the years that followed, the Conference focused on such topics as religion in country life, farm youth's standards of living, rural government, disadvantaged classes in rural life, national policies affecting rural life, and on other pertinent subjects. In discussing the American Country Life movement, Dwight Sanderson in his *Rural Sociology and Social Organization,* pointed out that "one of the reasons for such an organization [A. C. L. A.] is the fact that the country life movement was not a single movement, but on its institutional side is composed of several movements each devoted to a special interest. . . . Thus there are separate movements for the rural church, rural health, etc., each of which has had its part in what may be termed the country life movement." And the rural church was, as we have seen, one of the first of these movements.

Still another development concerning religion in rural life took place when Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Jews joined hands in issuing a statement of principles underlining our national, state, and individual actions regarding man's relation to the land. This statement, signed by forty-five Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews, is of such significance that it is here quoted in its entirety.

> *We hold:*
>
> God created the world, of which the earth is a portion, with a purpose, and through his loving Providence He maintains the world for the good of human beings. Therefore, all human beings possess a direct natural right to have access to created natural resources.
>
> God's intention in creation is to enable man to live with dignity in accord with his noble nature and destiny, to develop his personality, to establish and maintain a family, and to be a useful member of society. Society exists to fulfill these aims.
>
> *The good earth*
>
> The land is God's greatest material gift to mankind. It is a fundamental source of food, fiber, and fuel. The right to use such elemental sources of life and development is essential for human welfare. No law or contract is superior to natural law. A fundamental human right is not to be denied or rendered ineffective by any legal ordinances, apparent previous rights or obligations.
>
> *Stewardship*
>
> Land is a very special kind of property. Ownership of land does not give an absolute right to use or abuse nor is it devoid of social responsibilities. It is in fact a stewardship. It implies such land tenure and use as to enable the possessor to develop his personality, maintain a decent standard of living for his family and fulfill social obligations. At the same time, the land steward

has a duty to enrich the soil he tills and to hand it down to future generations as a thank offering to God, the giver, and as a loving inheritance to his children's children.

The family and land

Since the family is the primary institution, access to land and stewardship of land must be planned with the family unit in view. The special adaptability of the farm home for nurturing strong and wholesome family life is the reason for the universal interest in land use and rural welfare. A unique relationship exists between the family and the vocation of agriculture. The farm is the native habitat of the family. The family's welfare must therefore have the first consideration in economic and social planning. Throughout the history of the United States these fundamental principles have been worked out through national and state legislation, and they have been upheld by court decisions and popular acclaim.

Land use and human welfare

Efficiency in land is not to be judged merely by material production but by a balanced consideration of the spiritual, social, and material values that redound therefrom to person, family, and society. The land is not to be a source of benefit to a favored few and a means of servile labor to the many.

Second only to making land available to the family is the responsibility of society to encourage and to educate the land stewards in the proper and most efficient use of the land and in such techniques as will make them masters of their own economic destiny.

The tiller's rights and duties

The worker on the land and his family possess the first right to the fruits of their toil for a decent standard of living. Second to such right come the rights of any nonoperating owner and of the state. Rural people have the right to receive directly their just share of the economic, social and religious benefits in organized society.

The stewards of the land owe sacred duties and obligations to God, the community and humanity. A faithful and honest fulfillment of their responsibilities goes hand in hand with their rights and privileges.

Suggested methods for the practical application of the declared principles on land policy:

1. Make use of the land an integral part of socio-economic planning and thinking.
2. Insist that education for land stewardship and the productive home be outstanding features of rural education.
3. Emphasize a special program of enlistment and training in secondary, liberal arts, technical and professional schools for professional service to the rural community.
4. Make the family-type farm operated by the owner a major objective of legislation and planning.

5. Reform the system of taxing land and improvements so as to facilitate access to natural resources, security of tenure and proper land use.

6. Revise land sale and rental contracts, mortgage obligations and other debt instruments so that no loss of ownership or insecurity of tenure be possible except through negligence or injustice on the part of the farmer-operator.

7. Discourage large land holdings as undemocratic and unsocial.

8. Where large-scale production is necessary and advisable, encourage the use of cooperative techniques with local ownership and management.

9. At all times encourage cooperatives as a means of intellectual, moral and material advancement.

10. Where and when large-scale industrialized farming exists and requires employment of seasonal or year-round labor, demand for such labor groups a living family wage, decent housing conditions and collective bargaining.

11. Urge that wages and housing for the laborer on the small farms be decent and just. (Low wages and poor housing for the farm laborer tend to lower the reward and standards of living of the family-type farmer, bringing his own family labor into competition with the poorly paid hired hand.)

12. Extend social security provisions, particularly health, old age and survivors' insurance, to farm people and other rural dwellers.

13. Develop locally owned and controlled business and industry in rural communities.

14. Encourage development of the "one foot on soil and one foot in city" type of living as greatly advantageous to the family when adequate cash income is secured from work in industry or commerce.

15. Make land settlement possible for returned soldiers and displaced war workers through proper financial and educational planning, provided qualified people so desire and sound arrangements can be made.

That this was more than merely a statement is borne out by the number of regional conferences that the Town and Country Committee held in 1945 to discuss land tenure. These conferences, initiated by the Committee on Town and Country, were sponsored by the Farm Foundation and were attended by both church leaders and agriculturalists. For the churches are realizing that if the soil washes away, the church loses its economic base; and that as tenancy and instability increase among the rural population, the churches close. Indeed, agricultural and denominational leaders are much interested in active co-operation. There was a time when agricultural leaders had to be cautious in making suggestions about the rural church and its program, while church leaders did not see the need for their being concerned about activities beyond religion. But over the years this situation has gradually changed, so that now the two are publicly recognizing that their problems are mutual in bringing a better level of living and way of life to all rural people. This movement was first started and fostered by the American Country Life Conference. But many states and counties have over the years been encouraging close working relationships between the churches and the agencies that serve rural people.

In March 1946, at the suggestion of rural church leaders. M. L. Wilson, Director of the Federal Extension Service, invited thirty-four Catholic and Protestant rural church leaders to meet with representatives of the Department of Agriculture. The purpose was threefold: (1) to discuss problems and programs of rural life that are of concern to both these groups; (2) to bring about a better understanding of the rural programs of church groups and of the activities and contributions of agricultural agencies; and (3) to explore opportunities for collaboration between agricultural agencies and rural church groups in improving farming and rural life. In opening this conference Mr. Wilson said: "The agricultural colleges and the Department of Agriculture are emphasizing a balanced program for farming. By a balanced program we refer to the emphasis and relationships of the forces of service, of education, and of religion, as they are related to individual and rural communities."

The Function of the Church

As a social institution within a given community the church is the creation of that community, and it therefore tends to perform the activities that the people desire and sanction. This makes for wide variation in the way the church functions in different communities. Some communities look to the church, providing a staff accordingly, to perform a wide range of activities, including comprehensive youth and community recreational programs. In such communities the church building may be used for most worth-while organizational meetings. At the other extreme are churches that have little or no concern about community problems, spiritual guidance being almost their sole function. And since the church is the creation of the community, the right and the power to change, or to redefine, its role and function lie within the resourcefulness of the community.

While the family and the school each has specific responsibilities for the socialization of the individual, it is an important function of the church as a social agency to move the socialization process beyond the community. In other words, the church should be the social agency whereby man becomes completely socialized within the universe. Paralleling the work of the school, the church aids in expanding early social experiences that extend from, and go beyond, the family. But it reaches further. For the function of the church in the process of socialization is to lift and broaden the individual's social horizon, seeking to instill in man the spirit of Christian fellowship, of stability and trust. There are some who hold that farmers at present possess a higher degree of emotional stability and live in closer communion with the Creator than do other people. The evidence is not clear, however, as to how much the church can take credit unto itself for this, since it may be that this emotional stability is due in no small measure to the relationship of agriculture to the laws of nature, and indeed of supernature.

In any event, properly performing its function, the church holds that all men were created free and equal in the sight of God, and that man should rise to the highest position of citizenship, involving a fellowship of, and with, men around the world. Having this as its highest social function, the church not only teaches the individual that he is a citizen of the world, but that his life has meanings not exhausted in his own activities or in his own personal job, but that are eternally significant. If this function of the church were universally accepted and performed with distinction, world peace might be more a reality than an impotent hope.

CHAPTER 8

RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BY DOUGLAS ENSMINGER AND
T. WILSON LONGMORE

The Farmer's Government Is Local Government

The farmer's most intimate and meaningful contacts with government are local. And almost universally the farmer shows greatest interest in the school, which is generally the smallest unit of government, and certainly the closest to him both geographically and emotionally. But as the farmer expands his contacts with government, he moves out from the school to towns or townships, to the county, to the state, and to the nation. With the recent establishment of the United Nations Organization, the farmer must also participate in international government. Except in New England, however, where the town is the dominant local unit, the county has emerged as the most significant locality unit of government.

In the early days the farmer's contacts were limited primarily to neighborhood and community association, and for the most part his basic needs were met by the local community. Faced with limited means of transportation, the early settlers developed the town, which is still prevalent in New England. It provided both a legal unit of government and a unified group for protection and self-help, and it was capable of financing and giving leadership to the development of schools, churches, and other services. And since in general the town early developed a center, the area served both a governmental and a social function. Thus the town, because it was capable of meeting the basic social needs, has through the years come to function in much the same way as the trade-centered communities of the North and Middle West.

With the western movement of the population, the patterns of settlement varied greatly, for they included the plantation system in the South, as well as the system in the Middle West, whereby an individual operated a section of the land. These patterns of settlement, together with rapid improvement in transportation, largely determined the kind of local government to be developed. And in general the trend, during both the westward settlement of the country and the passage of time, has been towards a strengthening of the farmer's identification with the county and of its functions as a unit of government. As part of this development of county consciousness the county-seat town has increased in strength and "pulling power," both as the headquarters of county government and as an influential trade and social center. Certainly the increasing number of state and federal government administrative units that have over the years established offices in the county seat has greatly strengthened both the county-seat town and the identification of the people with the county. Indeed, in the South, because of the plantation type of settlement and the early dominance of the neighborhood, the county-seat towns early developed as the major trade centers for the entire county. For many of the small counties in the country, and particularly in the South, the county-seat town is very often both the trade and the community center for most of the county.

More and more the county is becoming both a geographic area for the organization of numerous farmer groups and the unit of government between the farm family and the various state and national programs and agencies. In a very real sense, it is through the county and its organizations and sponsored agencies that farmers participate in state and national programs. Generally the accepted pattern for agency relationship with farm people is to have that relationship operate through some county sponsoring committee that has either official or unofficial county status. In fact, one of the important links in the establishment and maintenance of the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service in the counties is that the county government provides a portion of the funds and makes provisions for local sponsorship and program determination. Likewise, the county has grown to be the administrative unit for many state and federal government programs, including those concerned with health, welfare, education, and a host of agricultural activities. But while the federal government recognizes the importance of county co-operation, their legal dealings are with appropriate state agencies that are in general charge of specific work; and the standards to be followed in expending federal funds are prescribed by the federal agency that administers the law, and are generally binding upon local officers. Thus, this federal-state-local co-operation of federally initiated programs results not only in the county's taking on new functions, but also in the relinquishment of its traditional independence.

In serving as the link between the farm family and the various state and federal programs and agencies, the county relationships with the array of services involved assume many forms. For example, in carrying out the provisions of the various acts of Congress that deal with soil conservation and domestic allotments, it has been customary to administer the public programs on a county unit basis with respective subdivisions. Article IV of the Articles of Association of County Agricultural Conservation Associations clearly sets forth the organizational structure envisioned in the administration of the agricultural conservation program of the Department of Agriculture as follows:

ARTICLE IV — *Local and County Organizations*

Section 1, Local Administrative Areas — Whenever necessary for efficient and fair administration, the county shall be divided into local administrative areas, hereinafter referred to as "communities." The boundaries of the communities shall be fixed by the Secretary of Agriculture after considering such recommendations as have been submitted. No such community shall include more than one county or parts of different counties. (See amendment.) (Note: With few exceptions the local administrative areas within the counties are the townships or minor civil divisions.)

Section 2, Delegates to the County Convention — Except in any county in which there is only one community committee, members of the Association entitled to vote at the community election meetings shall, at the time of the election of the community committee, elect from their number a delegate and an alternate delegate (to serve in case of absence, disability, resignation, disqualification, or removal of the delegate) to a county convention for the election of the county agricultural conservation committee (hereinafter referred to as the county committee). (See amendment.)

Section 3, Community Committee Members and Alternates — Members of the Association residing in a community and participating or cooperating in any program currently administered in such community through the Association shall elect annually from their number a community committee of three members, of whom one shall be elected as chairman and one as vice chairman. At the same election members of the community committee to serve in the order elected in case of the absence, disability, resignation, disqualification, or removal of any committeeman. With the prior approval of the Agricultural Adjustment Agency, a smaller number of members and alternates may be elected to any community committee in case such change is justified by the particular circumstances. (See amendment.)

Section 4, County Committee — (a) The delegates to the county convention from the several communities in a county shall in an annual convention elect the county committee for the county, which shall consist of three farmers who are members of the Association and are actively participating or cooperating in one or more of the programs described in Article V, Section 1 (3). One of such members shall be elected as chairman and one as vice chairman of the county committee. At the same election such delegates shall also elect from the members of the Association so actively participating or cooperating first and second alternate members of the county committee to serve in the order elected in case of the absence, disability, resignation, disqualification, or removal of any county committeeman.

(b) If the County Agricultural Extension Agent for the county is not elected secretary to the county committee and the Association (hereinafter referred to as secretary to the county committee), he shall be ex officio a member of the county committee but shall not have the power to vote.

(c) In any county in which there is only one community committee the community committee shall also be the county committee and shall consist of three members.

Under these provisions more than 3,029 county and over 34,134 community committees participated in the agricultural conservation program in the

United States in 1947; and more than 100,000 farm people worked on either the county or the community committees. The county committee, assisted by the community committees, is generally responsible for the carrying out of the agricultural program in the county, including the determination of farm acreage allotments, goals, normal yields, and other agricultural facts required under the program. With few exceptions almost all federal programs prescribe that there must be a local sponsoring citizen's group.

We have seen that the farmer's government is local government, and that as a citizen he participates simultaneously in many levels of government. For example, the farmer is still very much concerned about, and attached to, the local school, but he also casts his vote for local, state, and national officials, and expresses his views on a wide range of issues. In general, however, the farmer's interest and degree of participation in government varies with the size of the geographic unit of government, or of the area from which government representatives are selected.

Different Types of Government and Why

The only unit of local government found universally in rural America is the county. According to the late Theodore B. Manny, it was introduced into New England about 1645 "to serve primarily as a unit in the administration of justice, for the purpose of military organization, for the tax equalization between towns, and to perform the needed services of recording and probate for the area." It was probably because the town early took on the characteristics and functions of a community that it superseded the county in importance. And although the general tendency in the colonization of the country was to transplant to the New World forms of government that prevailed in the mother country, many underwent immediate transformation. Thus, while the New England town was largely transplanted from England, Virginia became the first colony to develop local governmental units when in 1643 it was divided into eight shires (counties). In the settlement of this state, and to a certain extent of the other Southern states, the face-to-face democracy that came into being in New England never had a chance because of the system of granting land in large blocks to a comparatively small group of holders. Indeed, Virginia represents the near peak of the early tendency toward centralization in colonial America, although the other Southern colonies were not far behind. As for the settlement of the West and Far West, the county early became the dominant unit of local government.

It was from England, Spain, and France that the pattern of local government in the United States was largely derived. English influence, as we have seen, was most pronounced in the New England colonies, as evidenced by the widespread dominance of the town as a local form of government. Spain's peculiar type of local government outdates both the English and French types, having been introduced into the Southwest by way of Mexico, and it is typified to this day in many villages in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The French type of political organization is most concentrated in the United States in Louisiana. But the present systems of local government are clearly an adaptation of European forms to the peculiar conditions existing in this country.

Counties originally were intended to function as subdivisions of the central state government in matters of general and statewide interest that the state legislature desired to have performed uniformly throughout the state area. Today, however, the counties tend to function in a more limited and local sense, and to the degree that they do so they are more independent than they were formerly. In Louisiana the unit that corresponds in function to the county in the rest of the United States is called a "parish." And in one state, Rhode Island, the county exists as an area but is not a unit of government. But in all other states the counties are functioning governmental units. Their importance, however, varies considerably from one section of the country to the other. Thus, the county is particularly weak in New England.

The Census Bureau enumeration of county units totals 3,070, which includes the five unorganized South Dakota counties, and also San Francisco, Denver, Philadelphia, and Suffolk County in Massachusetts. San Bernardino County, California, which consists of 20,175 square miles, is the largest county in the United States. In fact, its area exceeds that of any New England state except Maine. Arlington County, Virginia, which has an area of 25 square miles, is the smallest county. Counties tend to be large where population is sparse, as it is in the arid and mountainous Western regions, and small in the East and South. The population of counties varied in 1940 from 42 in Armstrong County, South Dakota, to 4,063,342 in Cook County, Illinois. Generally, the largest counties in an area tend to have small populations, and the smallest to have large populations. In his *Government in Rural America,* Lane W. Lancaster says: "If it is permissible to use such a word at all, one might say that the 'typical' American county is an area of about 600 square miles, containing approximately 20,000 inhabitants, and having within its borders no incorporated municipality with as many as 10,000 people." While population density per county is not the only criterion in determining the services that county government should, and can, afford to provide, it does suggest that with the wide range in population we might expect a comparable range in the services rendered through the government. It also suggests, as we shall see later, that if all people are to enjoy equal services, counties with sparse populations may have to join with other counties in providing such facilities as public health programs and modern consolidated schools.

In addition to the county other units of local government found throughout the United States are: (1) cities, villages, boroughs, incorporated towns, towns, and townships; (2) school districts; and (3) other special districts. The simplest form of local government is to be found in Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, and Georgia, where the average farm family living on an isolated farm would be a local citizen of a county only, there being no school districts or other governmental units in the open country. And in New England, the levels of local government directly affecting the average farm family consist of the town and, to some extent, of the county. The situation is more

TABLE 14

Primary Divisions into Which Counties Are Divided

State	Primary Divisions	Year of Statehood
NORTH EASTERN STATES		
Maine	Towns and cities	1820
New Hampshire	Towns and cities	*
Vermont	Towns and cities	1791
Massachusetts	Towns and cities	*
Rhode Island	Towns and cities	*
Connecticut	Towns	*
MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES		
New York	Towns and cities	*
New Jersey	Townships, cities, towns, boroughs	*
Pennsylvania	Townships, cities, boroughs	*
EAST NORTH CENTRAL		
Ohio	Cities, villages, townships	1803
Indiana	Townships	1816
Illinois	Townships and election precincts	1818
Michigan	Townships and cities	1837
Wisconsin	Towns, cities, villages	1848
WEST NORTH CENTRAL		
Minnesota	Townships, cities, villages	1858
Iowa	Townships	1846
Missouri	Townships	1821
North Dakota	Townships, cities, villages, towns	1889
South Dakota	Townships, cities, towns	1889
Nebraska	Election precincts, townships, cities	1867
Kansas	Townships, cities	1861
SOUTH ATLANTIC		
Delaware	Representative districts	*
Maryland	Election districts	*
Virginia	Magisterial districts	*
West Virginia	Magisterial districts	1863
North Carolina	Townships	*
South Carolina	Townships, school districts	*
Georgia	Militia districts	*
Florida	Election precincts	1845
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL		
Kentucky	Magisterial districts	1792
Tennessee	Civil districts	1796
Alabama	Election precincts	1819
Mississippi	Beats	1817
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL		
Arkansas	Townships	1836
Louisiana	Police jury wards	1812
Oklahoma	Townships, cities, towns	1907
Texas	Justices' or commissioners' precincts	1845
MOUNTAIN		
Montana	Civil townships, school districts, election precincts	1889
Idaho	Election precincts	1890
Wyoming	Election precincts	1890
Colorado	Election precincts	1876
New Mexico	Election precincts	1912
Arizona	Supervisorial districts	1912
Utah	Election precincts or districts	1896
Nevada	Townships	1864
PACIFIC		
Washington	Election precincts, townships	1889
Oregon	Election precincts	1859
California	Judicial townships	1850

* Thirteen original states

Source: Summarized U. S. Census, *Population*, Vol. 1, Number of Inhabitants.

complex in the states reaching west from New York to North Dakota, and south to Oklahoma, Missouri, and the Ohio River. For in these the average rural citizen is in direct contact with three levels of local government — the county, the township, and the school district. As for the Western and Southern states, in most the local government usually consists of the county unit and school districts. There may also be special districts in addition to these.

The primary divisions of the counties are designated in various ways, as is shown in Table 14. In New England they are called towns and cities; in the Middle West, townships, towns, villages, and cities; in the West, election precincts and townships; and in the South, magisterial districts, civil districts, militia districts, police jury wards, justices' or commissioners' precincts, and election precincts. Except in a few of the Midwestern states, notably Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana, the township, while still a legal entity, is relatively unimportant. In the states stretching from New York to North Dakota, the geographic or congressional township delineated by the land surveys is quite generally used as the organized civil township, which has certain functions of local government. Table 15 shows the rank order of expenditures for the main town and township functions. In New England the primary function of towns is the building and maintenance of schools, while in most of the remaining states that have the township form of government, highway expenditures rank at the top. In Illinois, however, the township's most important function is the support of public welfare functions; and in Iowa, Michigan, and Washington its main function is general control. Public safety assumes first importance in New Jersey. In states like Illinois and Iowa the township is also a very important social unit in that farm bureaus are organized on a township unit basis, and the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service usually recognizes the township as constituting the geographic "community." Thus farmer meetings are usually township meetings. In fact, in Iowa, because of the strong "we" feeling that people have toward the township, educators are finding it exceedingly difficult to sell the merits of school consolidation, for the farmers insist on keeping their local schools.

Towns and townships rank next to school districts in total numbers. Table 16 gives a fairly accurate idea of their geographical distribution. Thus it may seem that they have not penetrated into either the South or the West, and that their influence as local units tends to decrease as one travels westward from New England. In fact this form of governmental organization appears not to be well adapted either to areas of sparse settlement, such as the Great Plains, or to the highly stratified society of the South. There is also doubt that the pure type of town government can survive the degree of urbanization that is taking place in the East and Middle West. In any event, New England towns are distinctly ahead of townships elsewhere with respect to population, and in size they tend to be smaller than the arbitrary township area of 36 square miles.

According to the United States Office of Education, there were in 1945–46 over 100,000 basic local school administrative units, school districts, in the United States. The area over which a school board presides may, or may not, be identical with the county, city, village, or town. While in eleven

14. "We, the jury, find the defendant not guilty."
[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

15. Country doctor examines young patient
[Courtesy Farmers' Home Administration, U.S.D.A.]

16. Alabama farmers inquire about their cotton allotments under the A.A.A.

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Forsythe]

17. Farm youngsters fishing

[Courtesy U.S.D.A., photograph by Ackerman]

TABLE 15

Rank Order of Expenditures by Towns *or* Townships *for Certain Items, 1942*
(*Numbers indicate order: 1, largest expenditure; 7, smallest*)

States	Highways	Schools	Public Welfare	General Control	Public Safety	Sanitation	Health and Hospitals
U.S. or total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
North Eastern States							
Maine	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
New Hampshire	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
Vermont	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
Massachusetts	3	1	2	5	4	7	6
Rhode Island	4	1	3	5	2	6	7
Connecticut	3	1	4	2	5	6	7
Middle Atlantic States							
New York	1	7	3	2	4	5	6
New Jersey	2	4	6	3	1	5	7
Pennsylvania	1	—	—	3	2	4	5
East North Central							
Ohio	1	5	7	2	3	6	4
Indiana	6	1	2	3	5	7	4
Illinois	2	7	1	3	6	5	4
Michigan	3	—	4	1	2	5	6
Wisconsin	1	2	4	3	6	5	7
West North Central							
Minnesota	1	—	3	2	4	5	6
Iowa	5	2	6	1	3	—	4
Missouri	1	—	3–4	2	5	—	3–4
North Dakota	1	—	—	2	4	3	5
South Dakota	1	—	—	2	3	4	—
Nebraska	1	—	—	2	3	—	—
Kansas	1	5	—	2	3	4	—
South Atlantic							
*Delaware							
*Maryland							
*Virginia							
*West Virginia							
*North Carolina							
*South Carolina							
*Georgia							
*Florida							
East South Central							
*Kentucky							
*Tennessee							
*Alabama							
*Mississippi							
West South Central							
*Arkansas							
*Louisiana							
*Oklahoma							
*Texas							
Mountain							
*Idaho							
*Wyoming							
*Colorado							
*New Mexico							
*Arizona							
*Utah							
*Nevada							
Pacific							
Washington	2	—	—	1	3	4	—
*Oregon							
*California							

* Indicates states containing no towns or townships as primary divisions

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Governmental Finances in the U.S., 1942, Part A, Table 9, pp. 38–46.

TABLE 16

Number of Local Governmental Units by State, Grouped According to Census Regions

States	Number of Counties	Number of Towns or Townships	Number of School Districts
NORTHEASTERN STATES			
Maine	16	498	—
New Hampshire	10	224	244
Vermont	14	240	272
Massachusetts	13	316	—
Rhode Island	—	32	—
Connecticut	8	154	42
MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES			
New York	57	932	9,504
New Jersey	21	236	546
Pennsylvania	66	1,574	2,585
EAST NORTH CENTRAL			
Ohio	88	1,337	2,095
Indiana	92	1,016	194
Illinois	102	1,481	12,186
Michigan	83	1,268	7,069
Wisconsin	71	1,289	7,790
WEST NORTH CENTRAL			
Minnesota	87	1,973	7,755
Iowa	99	1,602	4,879
Missouri	114	345	9,211
North Dakota	53	1,470	2,187
South Dakota	64	1,177	3,440
Nebraska	93	506	7,224
Kansas	105	1,550	8,772
SOUTH ATLANTIC			
Delaware	3	—	213
Maryland	23	—	—
Virginia	100	—	—
West Virginia	55	—	410
North Carolina	100	—	1,383
South Carolina	46	—	1,795
Georgia	161	—	—
Florida	67	—	882
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL			
Kentucky	120	—	395
Tennessee	95	—	—
Alabama	67	—	112
Mississippi	82	—	5,536
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL			
Arkansas	75	—	3,193
Louisiana	64	—	66
Oklahoma	77	969	4,869
Texas	254	—	7,571
MOUNTAIN			
Montana	56	—	2,437
Idaho	44	—	1,363
Wyoming	23	—	407
Colorado	62	—	2,033
New Mexico	31	—	94
Arizona	14	—	457
Utah	29	—	40
Nevada	17	—	312
PACIFIC			
Washington	39	73	1,739
Oregon	36	—	2,129
California	57	—	3,677

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Governmental Finances in the U.S. 1942, Part A, Table 9, pp. 38–46.

states the county is the principal area of school administration, in ten, the town or township is the main area used, and in twenty-seven, there is chiefly a division into other districts.

Frequently the established unit of local government is unwilling to give a service that is desired in only part of its area, or constitutional restrictions prevent it from assuming a new service. In such cases it is often customary to leave the old units intact and to create new units. School districts are, as we have said, the most numerous types of units. Special districts, in addition to school districts, can be classified broadly into two groups: (1) special districts of the general government kind; and (2) special districts of the public-service enterprise kind. The most numerous special districts, classified by function, are: drainage districts, highway districts, and safety (fire and police) districts. Irrigation districts are localized in the Western United States, while most of the flood and levee districts are in the South.

The geographical distribution of special districts is very uneven, and it is difficult to see any pattern of application. But the South and seaboard states have relatively few, while some of the newer states have many. As William Anderson says, "It may be that special districts in large numbers are a symptom of newness, a disorder of youth, and that as a local government system acquires maturity, it tends to eliminate such excrescences." Certainly close study of local governmental units and their functions suggests that it is easier to establish a new unit than it is to modify or abolish an old one. And this in turn suggests that local government is imbedded deep in our culture, and that we have not been sufficiently aggressive in our educational programs and efforts with respect to government. In general, people are more emotional than rational in their attitudes towards changes in local government structure and function.

In 1942 the United States contained 155,115 units of government, of which all but 49 – the federal government and 48 state governments – were local governmental units of one kind or another. As may be seen in Table 17, these units of local government are more numerous in the North Central States than in any other area, while the Northeast, which includes New England and the Middle Atlantic states, have fewer units of local government. Between 1932 and 1942 the number of governmental units declined from 175,369 to 155,115, principally through a net loss during the decade of

TABLE 17

Regional Distribution of Units of Local Government, 1932 and 1942

Region	1942	1932	Decrease between 1932 and 1942	
	Number	Number	Number	Per cent
Northeast	17,085	20,902	3,817	18.3
North Central	96,595	100,575	3,980	4.0
South	25,130	35,970	10,840	30.1
West	16,305	17,922	1,617	9.0
Total	155,115	175,369	20,254	11.5

(Includes Federal Government)

about 20,000 school districts. Table 17 shows that the percentage of decrease in local governmental units has been more pronounced in the South and Northeast than in the other regions of the country. The heavy decrease in the South is largely explained by the elimination of all townships in Oklahoma.

Local Governmental Services Expand

All indications are that the county has, and will, become increasingly more important as both the unit of government and the unit of organization. Certainly recent studies of local government make it unmistakably clear that the trend is toward increased centralization of government. Already we have seen that as school consolidation develops under the guidance of state and federal leadership, new community and county administration units are created to replace the smaller ones. Moreover, the maintenance of roads, long a function of the township, is now in general assumed by state and federal departments of highways, leaving to the township the task of looking after only minor routes. And, with few exceptions, police protection is being assumed by the county. In general, this change or transference to the county of functions formerly assumed by townships has been a gradual process, and has come about because the townships were no longer capable of giving adequate service.

TABLE 18

Per Cent Distribution of Expenditures for Operation of State and Local Governments, by Type of Government, 1942

Type of Government	Total	General Control	Public Safety				Highways	Sanitation	Health and Hospitals	Public Welfare	Schools	Other and Undistributed
			Total	Police	Fire	Other						
Total	100.0	10.1	10.5	5.4	3.2	2.0	11.1	2.6	8.0	17.0	31.0	9.7
States	100.0	9.2	6.6	2.0	0.1	4.5	13.5	—	15.4	27.4	13.1	14.9
Counties	100.0	20.1	4.6	3.1	—	1.5	19.6	0.2	9.7	31.6	6.6	7.6
Cities	100.0	9.3	23.9	13.1	9.4	1.4	9.6	7.3	6.8	12.0	22.0	9.1
Population over 25,000	100.0	8.3	23.7	12.9	9.4	1.4	7.0	7.0	7.5	13.8	24.1	8.6
Population under 25,000	100.0	14.5	25.1	14.3	9.5	1.3	22.8	8.5	3.1	3.0	11.4	11.6
Townships and Towns	100.0	12.6	8.3	3.7	3.5	1.1	27.9	2.2	2.2	14.3	27.8	4.7
School Districts	100.0	3.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.6	—	91.5	4.2
Special Districts	100.0	—	8.8	—	4.7	4.1	5.3	23.2	2.2	—	—	60.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Governmental Finances in the U.S., 1942, U.S. Summary, Part of Table 9, p. 38

Counties possess only such powers as have been specifically delegated to them by the constitutions and legislatures of their respective states. This means that since the county and its functions are the creation of the state, they can be modified by the state. According to Theodore B. Manny, "The residual or unenumerated powers reside in the State governments and there remain, until legislatures or the people through the initiative choose to turn over certain additional powers to the counties." As is shown in Table 18, among the most important functions performed by the county as an instrumentality of the state are: (1) public welfare; (2) general control; (3) highways; (4) health and hospitals; (5) public safety; (6) sanitation.

Expenditures for "public welfare" functions include public assistance in the form of aid to dependent children and to veterans, and they also usually cover the costs of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government, and of general administrative boards and commissions. The function regarding highways means responsibility for all roads and structures necessary for their use, as well as their servicing. Health functions include the collection of vital statistics, food regulation and inspection, child and adult health services, prevention and control of communicable disease, and the provision of laboratories, health centers, clinics, public health information, and public health nursing. The costs of general and special hospitals are also included. School services are composed of administration, instruction, operation and maintenance of plant, and the payment of fixed charges and capital outlay. Police, fire, and war activities, along with other protection of persons and property, fall under the public safety functions. Finally, sanitation covers sewer construction and maintenance and sewage disposal, garbage and other refuse collection and disposal, and sanitary regulation and inspection. Public welfare programs rank highest in cost in sixteen states; general control services in fourteen, highways in eleven, schools in five, and health and hospitals in only one. Throughout most of the United States in 1942 the primary functions of county government were generally: first, public welfare; second, general control; third, highways.

The three most costly state and local functions are those connected with highways, public welfare, and schools. Local governments bear more than 90 per cent of the cost of schools but less than 60 per cent of the cost of public welfare programs and less than 70 per cent of highway costs. Thus schools are revealed as the most decentralized of the three primary functions of state and local government. In respect to the operational expenditures of state and local government, the largest costs are those of cities, then follow those of states, school districts, counties, townships, and finally, special districts. Per capita expenditures by local governments are generally highest in the industrial East, Middle West, and Far West, where they are in contrast to the low-level expenditures in the South and Southwest. It is worth pointing out that while there is need for expanded school functions, the major financial responsibility for them remains a function of the local government. This is so because local sponsoring boards have resisted financial aid, which in the past has usually had strings attached that would make it necessary for the local government to give up some of its cherished independence. It took the depression of the 1930's to convince many local government units that they could no longer adequately meet their welfare needs. In the case of highways, outside money has usually been welcome, because it gave rural people much needed improvements in roads, and, of course, brought employment into the area.

At this point it might be well to examine the administrative machinery that gives direction to the ever-expanding functions of the county. In general, the "county board" exercises the only general supervisory function in the county. In the majority of states county boards are composed of a small body of three or five members who are chosen either from the county at large or from districts into which the county is divided. Large boards are found in twelve states: Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana (parish), Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Two States, Rhode Island and Georgia, have no county boards. In Rhode Island local functions are delegated to the towns, while in Georgia the county judge functions in place of a county board. The remaining thirty-four states have small county boards. County board members are elected by popular ballot in nine states, while in eight states the duties of the county board are performed by some other county official. Generally speaking, most other county officials are elected by the citizenry of the county. In any event, county boards are usually powerful local nucleuses of county political organizations, for they constitute the most powerful local political body, have in their charge relatively large amounts of public property, and supervise the spending of large sums of public money. As Lancaster says, "Whatever the geographic location may be the court house is certainly the political center of the county. To it and from it run the tangled threads of influence and power, favoritism and discipline, by which the somewhat furtive gentlemen in power keep the organization intact."

The relationship of these governing boards to the citizens constitutes one of the major problems in making local government something that is run for and by the people. It is certainly run by the people in that they elect these governing boards, but since local citizens are not too well informed and many are not concerned, it is a moot question whether the government is always for the best interests of all. But whatever the case may be, the people have only themselves to blame, for if they took an intelligent interest in government they would elect responsive and intelligent leaders.

While the county continues to expand its functions, there has not been much progress in clarifying the relationship between the legislative, judicial, and executive phases of county government. About all that can be said is that there has been growth in county government, but it has been without much integration or direction. In the county we find an absence of any single person who is in charge as the mayor is in charge of a city. Moreover, the body responsible for levying taxes and determining administrative policy exercises little legislative influence. Elective or appointed offices, such as those of sheriff, recorder of deeds, and treasurer, perform varied functions and are seldom related to the board or council. Federal and state agencies working in the county operate independently of each other and do little more than inform the county officials as to what they are about. The result of all this complex government within the county is that people are confused and tend to be indifferent, leaving to each agency, group, and body of officials the task of doing the best they can without much citizen participation.

In general, local people seem unconcerned about the present inefficiency and overlapping in governmental functions. They are too emotionally tied to local government to appraise it, and they want to hold on to it because they feel that it is the last stronghold of democracy. But actually, state and national party leaders have in the development of their party "machine" depended upon the continued existence of local government that reaches as far down to the townships as possible. As a result, in a very real sense the local governmental officials, whether elected or selected, owe their jobs to the party in power, for they ride into office with the winning party, and not because they have campaigned for improvement in local government or because they have any special qualifications for the job. This means that the local political organization is maintained primarily in order to help the party win its ticket rather than out of consideration for better local government. In general, the appointed local officials are of the same caliber as the elected ones, for they get their appointment because of their loyalty, and they work for the party. People simply are not critical or analytical with respect to their local government. They tolerate the local "courthouse gang" until the situation becomes unbearable; then they kick them out and elect another group equally incapable and as much entangled in politics. Moreover, Dwight Sanderson holds that "With the strong tendency to nationalize many social services, it will be increasingly difficult to break down the ties which bind local politics to national party organizations." And he remarks: "The financial relationships which bind the national government to the state and counties tend to force local units to maintain friendly relations with state and national party machines if they wish to obtain their share of grant-in-aid and to maintain control of local administration."

While changes in local government may be highly desirable, we had better understand that they come slowly. Studies of school and local governments indicate the need for further consolidation of schools in keeping with other basic rural life trends, and the necessity for local governments to provide more modernized services. Probably one of the most fundamental changes that is taking place with respect to local government started back in the 1930's during the depths of the depression. Local units of government found themselves helpless in meeting the crisis created by the depression. Thus, in order to meet the pressing needs of those times, the states and, more generally, the federal government developed programs and set up their own administrative machinery. Many of the programs, activities, and services that were taken on during this period remain in state and federal control.

The grant-in-aid method of helping local governmental units to provide modern services is another important development and change in local government. Many states now follow the grant-in-aid plan of aiding schools, and all states are participating in the Social Security program. As for health care, we now have the Federal Hospital Survey and Construction Act, which makes possible federal, state, and local participation in the construction of hospitals. State and federal leadership is also increasingly urging the further development and modernization of county health units. Through this method the local government, if it is to receive financial aid, usually has to agree to standards set by the state or federal government, and in many cases by both. The net result is more and more outside domination and a loosening of local control. Finally, through the creation of numerous programs, none of which is specifically related to any other, we find developing within rural

America a highly complex and unco-ordinated system of programs to be administered at the county level. Since each has its own administrative charter, the tendency is for each to establish its own, and usually quite independent, plan of organization within the county.

Local government is affected by the degree to which a county is either rural or urban in character in that its structure tends to become more complex and impersonal with the increase in urbanization. In 1940 some 40 per cent of all the counties contained no urban center of 2,500 or more population, and about 60 per cent of all counties had no center of 5,000 or more population. (See Table 19.) The counties that were most rural in character (those whose largest center had a population of under 2,500) are located generally in the Great Plains of the West, in the mountain areas, in the Deep South, and in the highland border regions. With the continued increase within rural areas of suburban or "rural residents," there will surely be more urban interest and participation in local governmental programs. This will be true particularly when these rural residents realize that if they want the more modern services, they will have to work for them through established units of local government. In areas where there is already a heavy concentration of rural residents, we are now finding accelerated changes in such programs as those concerned with education, public health, sanitation, rural fire protection, and modernization of roads.

TABLE 19

Number of Counties in the United States, by Size of Largest City, 1940

	Number	Per Cent
All counties	3,070	100.0
Metropolitan *	233	7.6
Largest place: †		
25,000 or more	118	3.8
10,000 to 25,000	352	11.5
5,000 to 10,000	505	16.5
2,500 to 5,000	637	20.7
Under 2,500 ‡	1,225	39.9

* Counties having a central city of 50,000 population or more and adjacent counties having half or more of their population with a few exceptions: Warren, New Jersey; and Mercer, Pennsylvania; included in a metropolitan district established by the Bureau of the Census.

† Not included in metropolitan areas.

‡ Includes counties that have no incorporated places and three unorganized counties.

Source: Nettie P. Bradshaw, *County Classification by Size of Largest City*, USDA, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D.C., October 1944, (dittoed).

Counties Appraise Themselves

Whatever else the previous discussion reveals, it shows that local government has become very complex, and that more and more it is taking on service functions. And these new functions have been added without any great modifications in its existing structure. The result has been an accumulation of new political units, few of which are co-ordinated. Over the years many studies of local government have been made, but for the most part they have been made by students of local government and without the active participation of the people. In pointing out the weakness and the need for change, such studies have been revealing. But since the local people were not helped to see local government as something of which they were a part, and to realize that it functioned or failed to function according to whether or not they interested themselves in it and gave leadership, little change occurred.

We repeat, change comes slowly in local government. In fact, in looking for change in local government, it might be well to recognize that it has traditionally come more slowly in local government than in any other of our social institutions. This is probably because local people felt that whatever control they had over government was local, and they wanted to keep this control. But slow as change may be, it nevertheless has occurred and is continuing to occur.

Much has been said about the need for consolidation of counties. Many have held that since counties do not follow any community patterns, and may lack both the population and the resources that are necessary in order to provide rural people with modern services, they should be consolidated in the interests of greater efficiency. Those who have pushed the point have argued that through consolidation of counties it would be possible to provide a more competent, full-time staff. Lancaster, for instance, believes that it is difficult to provide for a full-time, competent staff in counties that have populations of less than 25,000. Note, however, that close to 65 per cent of our counties had less than this number of people in 1940. Studies of local government conclude that to get the maximum service from county government the following must be present: efficient and economic administration, adequate financial resources, and a location that will make services readily available to the people. After a careful analysis of county consolidation in terms of such criteria, Lancaster concludes: "The county under present conditions is too small in population and area and too weak financially to support an efficient administrative organization of personnel." Even in face of such evidence, however, consolidation is being resisted, and many feel that few counties will voluntarily consolidate. And interestingly enough, Arthur C. Millspaugh says: "Consolidation is probably not theoretically applicable to more than a quarter of the counties of the United States," and that "in most regions, an effort to consolidate would merely waste time and energy." This conclusion is certainly supported by the facts, for the counties that have consolidated have been few indeed. Furthermore, since so many factors would have to be taken into account, competent political scientists feel that even if consolidation were possible on a voluntary basis, it would not be the solution because the best interests of the state might not be secured. Ideally any such reorganization should, if it is attempted, be a part of a state-wide plan in which all the facts and forces are taken into account. We must conclude that county consolidation is a long way in the future.

While consolidation seems improbable, there are other things that counties can do to modernize their management. We have already referred to the fact that for all practical purposes the only overall leadership given to county government is that provided by the county boards. Many of these boards are large and unwieldy. In general, studies reveal that more efficient and economic administration could be had by electing smaller boards, and by changing the practice, where it exists, of electing members from a township to selecting them at large. But it is likely that such a proposal would also meet great resistance.

Students of local government also feel that, in general, the present system of electing all county officials needs change. To correct this they suggest the short ballot, that is, electing only key officials and appointing minor ones. This, they say, would better assure getting into office qualified people rather than those who stood by the party. But since such a system would tend to undermine the foundations of parties by keeping many loyal workers from holding jobs, it is highly doubtful that this plan, even though desirable, stands much chance of being adopted.

As we pointed out, since the county board has little or no supervisory responsibility over the elected officials, and since agencies are generally answerable to state and federal supervision, there is almost complete lack of co-ordination of purposes and programs in the counties. In this situation it is difficult to place responsibility, for individuals tend to shun it. To give counties some administrative direction, students of local government have suggested the adoption of the county-manager plan, which closely follows the city-manager plan now operating successfully in a number of cities. Even though such a development has been made possible through permissive laws in a few states, except in a very few of the more suburban counties the plan has not caught on. And it is certain that those who now operate local governments will not take the leadership in initiating such a plan. Indeed, only an informed citizenry could usher in such a plan on a wide basis.

Not infrequently, local citizens do become dissatisfied with the way local government operates, and they then organize for change. This has its weakness, however, in that such groups tend to confine their efforts to changing a specific phase of local government. They seldom go to the root of the problem.

One of the most far-reaching experiments in the field of social planning directed toward co-ordination and action was the Land-Use Planning Program, which was sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges in the late 1930's and early 1940's. This was widely referred to as democratic planning, for the professional agricultural leaders in the counties aided the rural people to analyze and define their problems systematically. Moreover, they were free to concern themselves with all problems, and many did. In the matter of local government, many discovered that: (1) they were not now fully utilizing some of the services; (2) some services had become obsolete and were therefore in need of modification; (3) before they could get such added services as public health, they would have to vote additional taxes; (4) they were not getting the best possible educational programs for the money that was being spent; (5) much land should be zoned out of agriculture, but to do so would require the state's allowing it;

(6) roads were not always being improved in the areas of greatest need; (7) governmental services were generally more effective when the people participated in program development and when the several agencies of government worked as a team. These and other problems for the first time became of concern to rural people in many counties throughout the United States. Because people became aroused to their needs and requested adjustments and added services, the government agencies became more alert and tried to give the services requested or needed by the people.

Although as a national effort Land-Use Planning became dormant as we entered the war in the early 1940's, some states, notably Michigan and Indiana, continued it through the war. Minnesota went far enough with its planning to enact some zoning legislation that made it possible to take much of the nonproductive land in the cutover counties out of agriculture. More recently a number of states have started to evaluate the accomplishments of Land-Use Planning. Moreover, in the summer of 1947 the Land Grant College Committee on Organization and Policy of the Land Grant College Association appointed a subcommittee to re-evaluate planning and bring before the Organization and Policy Committee recommendations for its continuance and revitalization under Extension leadership.

An isolated experiment with a county-wide council was carried on in Greenville County, South Carolina, between 1936 and 1941. In summarizing the results of this experiment, Kolb and Brunner say it had three notable achievements: "It aroused public interest and concern regarding local social problems; it demonstrated the need for professional and trained personnel and the importance of working closely with voluntary and lay leaders; and it indicated that success is achieved in proportion to democratic planning and the assumption of responsibility at the community level." [1]

Furthermore, the Council on Intergovernmental Relations has recently completed an experiment in what is hoped will be a demonstration of methods of perfecting services rendered through government. In the summer of 1947 the Council was sponsoring five experimental counties: Blue Earth County, Minnesota; Henry County, Indiana; Colquitt County, Georgia; Santa Clara County, California; and Skagit County, Washington. The federal council that sponsored these experiments was composed of a group of public administrators and government officials who represented departments of the federal government; and associated with the federal council in the states where the experimental counties are located were state and local councils. The state councils were appointed by the governors, while the local councils represented the public officials and interested laymen in the counties that were undertaking the experimental demonstrations. All participating groups agreed upon the desirability of moving toward the following stated objective: "To devise administrative procedures and mechanisms for blending more harmoniously the powers and interests of the federal, state, and local governments in the execution of their common purpose."

Local groups who undertook the formulation of a plan aimed at this objective started with a consideration of the following matters: (1) What governmental services are we using in this country? (2) What governmental services are common to federal, state, and local governments in the sense that these services are jointly supported and administered through co-operative arrangements between the several levels of government? (3) What do the consumers of governmental services in our area feel to be the most constructive outcomes of these governmental programs? (4) What complaints are heard in our area about the services of government? (5) Among the complaints, which seem to have a real basis in fact, and what are the root causes of the difficulties? (6) What governmental services available seem: (a) Outmoded or unnecessary, (b) duplicative, (c) in need of expansion, (d) worthy of more extensive use locally? (7) How could local government carry a larger share of the responsibility for the operation of these governmental services? (8) Having in mind the total range of governmental services and functions in the county, what plan aimed at the objective would we like to test in our local area? The Council stated that the central feature of its program was the local formulation and testing of a plan aimed at the agreed-upon objective, with such assistance from state and federal governments as may be requested by the local councils.

---

[1] Brunner, Edmund deS.: *Community Organization and Adult Education*, University of North Carolina Press, 1942.

This was a co-operative undertaking purely voluntary in character. There were no legal compulsions. It was demonstrated that the mutual good will and confidence causing a local council to attempt the formulation and testing of a plan meet a similar response by state and federal administrators.

Already four counties — Blue Earth County, Henry County, Colquitt County, and Santa Clara County — have rendered progress reports, each of which suggests that the experiment is moving on sound grounds. The findings of the Henry County council are presented here. They were:

> That changed conditions have brought demands from the people for services that could not be (or at least were not) met by existing agencies.
>
> That citizens often fail to identify their own demands for service with the consequent increased cost of Governmental services. Somewhat parallel to this is willingness of one group to promote a self-interest public service, while objecting to a similar service for another group.
>
> That 327 distinct units and agencies serve Henry County citizens — 110 local, 111 State, and 106 Federal, with little planned coordination.
>
> That there is a correlation between centralization of control in industry and business and the trend toward increasing centralization in government control.
>
> That a considerable part of the "Home Rule" talk is just talk — that many persons "talk home rule and vote centralization."
>
> That many misconceptions prevail about government; that many of the criticisms have no basis in fact; that frustration as to understanding the growing complexity of our changing social and economic structure is at the root of most complaints.
>
> That certain failures to meet and solve problems have left the local governments in a weakened condition.

That one principal factor in the loss of prestige of local governments is their failure to combine their efforts and utilize their joint strength as a team.

That the combination of inability and failure (brought about largely by trying to carry on modern local government with a "Log Cabin" property tax system) plus the resulting taking over by State and Federal agencies, has left local government the short end of the governmental finance "pie."

That there are two principal reasons for failure to develop teamwork — (1) group-interest action which fences off activities (and freezes budgets) and (2) "defensive isolation" on the part of the individual officials who jealously guard their prerogatives and sometimes find they have only a dead or dying form left.

That there is some informal teamwork between related services. However, there is no over-all community check on what services the public gets, how well they are performed, whether they are actually needed or whether they could be adjusted to fit the local situation. In this connection many people feel that absence of a central public fact-finding and fact-reporting body charged with the responsibility of representing the over-all interest of the citizen may be at the root of demonstrated ineffectiveness of local governments to meet fast changing, large scale developments.

That active interest in governmental affairs exists but it finds no focal point for effective expression in even such a seemingly homogeneous area as Henry County. That interest which does exist is confused by partisan and group-interest thinking, with individual minds harboring tenets which make strange bed-fellows. This confusion stands to remain unless some mechanism which utilizes and focuses the thinking of all citizens emerges.

That many advisory and technical services are at present available to local units from the state and federal governments, but they are either little known or deliberately not used.

That overlapping exists within, and between, all levels of government. This is largely traceable to the relatively unplanned development of governmental services, and the as yet ineffective means of bringing about corrections.

That chief points of intergovernmental friction are;

1. Excessive regulations and "Red Tape" characterize some of the newer shared governmental services such as welfare and unemployment compensation so that both the administrators and the public are forced to spend much of their time just keeping up on new regulations.

2. Too much emphasis often placed on uniformity with the result that inflexible operating conditions are forced upon communities to which such conditions do not apply or are not adapted.

3. Lack of knowledge or appreciation by state and federal administrators of local needs and conditions.

4. Multiplicity of agencies in the community, many of which are performing the same service or similar services, to the confusion, irritation, and expense of the general public — plus the irritation and senseless rivalry of administrators.

5. Feeling of inferiority and "unfair trading position" of local government officials generally because of the weak, inadequate and ancient financial system under which local government works. One result is that when any ad-

ministrative concessions have to be made in the cooperative programs, local government usually is forced to grant the concession because it cannot afford to do otherwise.

6. Newness of a service and its effect on intergovernmental relations—especially if it produces major changes and is not accompanied by good "selling" to the public.

7. Failure of merit system to emphasize as a part of efficiency the acceptability or non-acceptability of a government employee within a community which results sometimes in the "square-peg-in-a-round-hole" situation, with loss to the government and irritation to the public.

The great test of these experiments comes as the Federal Council on Intergovernmental Relations concludes the experiment and the people have to choose between dropping their co-ordinating efforts or finding a way to continue on their own resources. Unfortunately, all similar experiments have in the past ceased activity when outside money and leadership have been withdrawn.

Local Government and Local Communities

The principal argument used to point out the need for reorganization of units of local rural government is based on an idea that the trend in rural society is toward the formation of functional units variously described as "communities," "trade areas," or "rurban communities." This historical argument usually runs about as follows. Our pattern of local government was laid out in the period when social relationships were circumscribed by the distance a team could haul a farm wagon from the farm and back again in a day. This era might reasonably be identified as the "team-haul" or the "horse-and-buggy" period of American community life. Under such limitations of transportation and communication, it was reasonable and economical to have many small local units so that all people could be within easy reach of the county seat, town hall, and school. The argument then continues. The automobile, the telephone, and the radio, plus modern improved roads and rural free delivery, have so conspired to change the conditions of rural life that it is necessary to readjust the structure of local government to conform more nearly to the present social situation. With the lessening of space, measured either in miles traveled or in time consumed while getting from one place to another, there is no further need for many local units, and they could very well be eliminated. Because of the need for specialization in modern society, many local units do not have adequate personnel nor economic and population bases adequate to support services that are needed. The solution suggested is that the numerous small units be reduced in number and that larger, more functional units replace them.

Some sociologists, particularly Dwight Sanderson, have drawn a very careful distinction between what are called the "natural" social areas and the more arbitrary straight-line boundaries of most units of local government. The natural-social-area concept is based on the assumption that surrounding each village or small urban center is an area in which the people have common business, social, and religious relations, and that because of the web of social relations persisting therein, this area constitutes a natural one for local governmental organization.

Back of this concept stands another important generalization upon which it is suggested that local government should be reorganized. This generalization maintains that there is in rural society a basic trend away from the localized or primary grouping of families to the larger, more secondary kind of grouping of which the "rurban" community is a type. Some sociologists go so far as to expound the theory that rural life is becoming more simplified through the rise of larger and more self-contained units. There is, however, much evidence to suggest that just the reverse trend is going on, and that rural life is tending thereby to become more complex since centers are increasingly taking on specialized functions. Certainly the size of community necessary to adequately support a complete public health unit is not in any sense the same as one that might support a rural clinic.

It seems clear, in fact, that what is actually happening is a growing interdependence among communities of different sizes which operates through specialization of functions. Finally, it is suggested that local units exist primarily for the efficient provision of general services and essential public services to rural people, and that this alone can be the point from which any discussion of adequacy may be derived. In other words, every group must answer satisfactorily for itself how it can best organize to provide programs for public welfare, schooling, highways, or general control.

There still remains the problem of deciding on the minimum or optimum size of each governmental unit in relation to the specific function to be performed. The tentative conclusions arrived at by Anderson seem particularly appropriate:

> First, is it desirable in rural as in urban areas to have only a single important administrative unit in each defined area? This certainly seems to be the case. In the same county area there may be one board for general county business, and another for administering school affairs, but that the areas should coincide and that budgets and debt questions should somehow be settled in common for the area can hardly be disputed.
>
> Second, assuming the county to be the main administrative unit in rural areas, what factors should determine its size? Topography, distance, and population density cannot be wholly ignored, but so far as possible the administrative efficiency and economy of the more expensive functions should control. These are roads and schools, as a rule.
>
> Third, when one of these services (roads) calls for a large unit, and the other (schools) could be handled by either a somewhat smaller unit or equally well if not better by the same large unit, which size of unit should be selected — the larger or the smaller? The answer is obvious. The larger is to be preferred, since it involves no financial or other loss, whereas the choice of the smaller sized unit would involve loss. It must always be remembered, also, that the state can better supervise a small number of large than a large

> number of small units, that the large units attract abler men both to their boards and to positions under them, and that the tax burden is more widely and evenly distributed when units are large.
>
> Fourth, will there not be some loss due to increased expense in other departments? Our studies in Minnesota suggest the opposite. When counties are ranged according to population, we find that the ordinary county expenses per capita decrease very noticeably as we advance from the least populous to the most populous counties. When we reach about 30,000 or 35,000 population, the per capita general expense declines less rapidly, but there is no evidence as in cities that the per capita costs go up again as population increases further. Hence we have concluded that under Minnesota conditions the minimum desirable population of the county is about 30,000, and that counties which fall below that level are bound to pay a little more per capita for equal service or else are compelled to accept less or poorer service. We do not assert that the same rule would hold in other states.[2]

A program of local governmental reorganization based on these principles would reduce the number of local units from the present 155,000 to less than 18,000.

---

[2] Anderson, William: *The Units of Government in the United States,* Chicago, Illinois: Public Administration Service, No. 42; 1934, pp. 34–35.

CHAPTER 9

RURAL HEALTH

BY DOUGLAS ENSMINGER AND T. WILSON LONGMORE

The Rural Health Problem Defined

In the minds of many Americans good health and rural environment are synonymous. Poet and philosopher have idealized the "naturalness" of life in the open country and have alluded to the physical and moral degeneration that supposedly prevailed in the city. Moreover, the military power of nations is widely believed to rest mainly on rural recruits. One writer, in fact, asserted that the "great military powers of the Continent" were well aware of the race degeneration resulting from city life, and that "with them agricultural protection was mainly a device to maintain the supply of countrybred recruits."

Perhaps the best summary of the general attitude is the statement made on February 2, 1821, by the Committee on Agriculture of the National House of Representatives in its report on "Objections to an Increase of Duties on Imports": "The agricultural state is more favorable than any other to the improvement of the physical and moral powers of man. Whilst an agricultural nation will be as powerful as others, it will be more virtuous and happy. It is in this state that the body is invigorated by healthful exercises; that the mind is ennobled by the freedom and independence of rural life; and that man feels the true dignity of his nature. Who would think of comparing the brave, hardy, and independent yeomen of this, or any country, to the miserable half-starved, rickety population of an English cotton factory? Who would compare the hardy mountaineer who pursues the deer, or slays the buffalo – to the poor decrepit, emaciated creature who has been all his life engaged in the same dull, stupefying routine of drawing out a ten yard thread, or manufacturing the eighteenth part of a pin?"

Because of such sentiments concerning the rural populace, many people were profoundly shocked at the unfavorable showing made by rural-bred men in the examination of selectees for service during World War II. For in comparing rural and urban selectees for the sample period of November and December, 1943, the best available nationally standardized data reveal that rural men were rejected for military service (including limited service) at a rate of 49.4 per cent, whereas the rate for urban men was 46.5 per cent. Furthermore, rejection rates were highest in the most rural states, particularly in those in the Southeast and South Central regions. Occupational data confirm the existence of this generally unfavorable health condition among rural people. Thus, among farmers and farm managers the rejection rate was 56.4 per cent; and among farm laborers and foremen, 52.8 per cent. Only two other occupational groups — domestic-service and emergency workers — and the unemployed showed higher rates than these.

Rural people as a group were formerly healthier, and the toll of fatal disease and premature death among them was lower than among urban people. What are the possible factors responsible for the decline in general health among rural people during the last forty or fifty years? First of all, mortality and morbidity rates have been decreasing more rapidly in the cities than in the rural areas, so that the hitherto relatively favorable health situation of rural people has changed into an unfavorable one. For a marked decrease in the standardized mortality rate and a notable increase in the average length of life (expectation of life at birth) have accompanied the growth of urbanization. Indeed, in 1944 the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company statistics reveal that for the first time in our history the average length of life of the American people, including military personnel within the country, exceeded 65 years, which is almost 16 years more than it was at the beginning of the century. And the rapid transfer of population toward urban centers is at least consistent with a coincident marked improvement in the physical health of the population as a whole.

The over-all average length of life has increased, but it has done so at a faster rate in the city than in the country. For instance, in 1900 the average span of life among white rural males was 10 years longer, and among females 7.5 years longer, than the corresponding life durations in cities. Between 1900 and 1939, however, the average length of life of white urban males increased 40 per cent, whereas the increase for rural males was only 19 per cent. Moreover, the statistics for white females were almost as striking. And although in 1939 the life expectancy in rural areas slightly exceeded that in cities, the Census Bureau points out that this difference would be minimized if the underregistration of rural deaths were taken into account. Therefore, unless measures are taken to reduce the number of preventable deaths in rural areas, the average urban life span will soon probably exceed that of the rural population.

The trend in the death rate in urban and rural areas has particular significance when the figures are corrected for age. For although Table 20 shows a decrease since 1900 in the standardized general mortality rate for both urban and rural people in all age groups, in each group the urban decrease is greater than the rural. And while a city environment is considered particularly unfavorable to child life, the mortality rates of urban, as well as of rural children under five years of age have shown a striking decrease since the beginning of the century.

It is to be expected that rural people, because of their environment and demographic composition, will display a health pattern different from that of urban people. Thus, since illness and death are most prevalent among the youthful and the aged, an evaluation of the rural health problem should take into account the fact that rural areas have more than half of the nation's children under fifteen years of age, and a higher proportion of persons over sixty-five years of age. And in noting that in 1940 nearly half of the nation's births, and two fifths of its deaths were rural, one should also remember that 43 per cent of the total population were then living in communities with less than 2,500 inhabitants.

TABLE 20

Mortality Trends: Number of Deaths per Thousand Population by Age in Urban and Rural Communities and the Percentage Decrease in Death Rates, 1900–2 to 1940 *

Age	Urban		Rural		Percentage Decrease 1900–2 to 1940	
	1900–2	1940	1900–2	1940	Urban	Rural
0–4	55.5	13.5	32.1	12.3	76	62
5–9	5.2	1.1	3.2	1.0	79	69
10–14	2.9	1.0	2.5	1.0	66	60
15–19	4.8	1.7	4.2	1.8	65	57
20–24	7.1	2.3	5.8	2.6	68	55
25–29	8.4	2.7	6.2	2.9	68	53
30–34	9.8	3.4	6.4	3.3	65	48
35–44	12.5	5.5	7.3	4.7	56	36
45–54	18.9	11.7	10.6	8.9	38	16
55–64	35.0	24.8	20.6	18.6	29	10
65–74	68.6	52.1	47.8	42.8	24	10
75 and over	155.4	131.5	133.6	126.1	15	6
All ages						
Crude	18.4	11.5	14.2	9.8	38	31
Standardized	20.8	11.4	13.9	9.9	45	29

* The rates for 1900–2 are for the original registration states; those for 1940 are for the total United States. The 1940 rates are by place of residence rather than place of occurrence of the death. Rural in 1900–2 = places under 8,000 population; in 1940 = places under 2,500. The total United States population for 1940 was used as the standard population.

Source: Dorn, Harold F., "Rural Health and Public Health Programs," *Rural Sociology*, 7:25, March 1942. Data for 1940 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Special Reports, Vital Statistics of the United States, 1940.

Infant mortality is claimed to be one of the best indexes of a level of living. It is significant that the lowest rates (39.3 per thousand live births) occur in large cities, that is, those with populations of over 100,000; the highest (53.4 per thousand population) in small cities (2,500, to 10,000 population); while rural areas are a close second with a rate of 50.1 per thousand population. As for mortality at the advanced ages, it appears to be lowest in rural areas. The apparent lower death rates among the rural aged, however, may be fictitious, due to the tendency of rural people to exaggerate their age in order to increase their status, and to the fact that, birth registration being a recent innovation, their memories are not reinforced by official records. In cities, on the other hand, where advanced age is a handicap in securing industrial employment, and where the occasions to record one's exact age are frequent, the figures are distorted in the opposite direction, so that the mortality rate among advanced ages is probably higher than it appears. Still, while the great strides that have been made in preventive health measures with respect to childbirth and the early years of life have increased average longevity, the improvement in expectation of life in this century has not been restricted to the young people, but has extended into the higher ages as well. Thus, in 1940, persons of forty had a life expectancy of 31.6 years, which represented a gain of practically 3.3 years over their expectancy in 1900.

With regard to disease, the urban situation has again improved more noticeably. During the 1930's influenza and pneumonia became more prevalent in the rural than in the urban districts, at the same time that many advances were being made in the treatment of pneumonia. Typhoid fever, formerly a ravishing disease in the cities, is now regarded as mainly a rural disease. And although the difference between the rural and urban death rates from tuberculosis is narrowing, so that the rural rate is no longer much higher, occupational factors in the urban center, as well as age distribution, may be more responsible for the incidence of this disease than the inherent character of the urban environment.

The Volume of Sickness

Death alone is not always a good indicator of the need for medical services. But the available data concerning sickness are less extensive and less exact than mortality statistics. The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care undertook a study of illnesses occurring between 1928 and 1931 in communities of different sizes. The data were gathered by visiting certain households every two to four months for one year and recording the family's reported illnesses. Illness was defined as any symptom, disorder, or affection that persisted for at least a day, or for which medical service (excluding dental service, eye refractions, immunizations, or routine physical examinations) was received, or for which medicine costing at least fifty cents was purchased. Under this definition many minor conditions, such as colds, small injuries, or digestive upsets, would evidently be unrecorded.

The slightly greater rate of illness that the Committee found in small towns and rural areas is not sufficient evidence on which to ascribe a higher morbidity rate to rural as compared with city people, especially since the lowest rate of all occurred among the open-country population. For while the rates of disabling illnesses per thousand persons were lowest in the open country, higher in large cities, and highest in villages and small cities, the fact that health departments existed in only the most prosperous of the rural areas studied would qualify the interpretation of the data. Moreover, the sampling did not adequately represent certain regions of the country, notably the South, where rural health needs are probably greatest. Finally, the study was confined to white families only. But besides the shortcomings of the study, the traditional opinions of farm people undoubtedly play some part in cutting down the number of illnesses reported in rural areas. The rhythm of farm life, conditioned as it is by nature, enforces a regimen of work that may at times brook no compromise, so that the farmer may be driven into the fields despite a physical condition that would keep the city man inside.

It is perhaps well to point out in this connection that the "need" is not necessarily the same as the "demand" for medical care. For the demand is conditioned largely by the economic resources of the family and its accepted standards of medical care, whereas the real need for medical care is a medical rather than an economic concept. In *The Fundamentals of Good Medical Care*, a classic work on the subject, Lee and Jones state: "It [the need] can be defined only in terms of the physical conditions of the people and the capacities of the science and art of medicine to deal with them. Thus it is not always a conscious need, still less an active desire backed by willingness to pay. The ordinary layman lacks the knowledge to define his own medical needs and can rely only on the expert opinion of medical practitioners and public health authorities. But he should be expected to recognize the proper occasion for consulting a physician. Moreover, he must be able to cooperate intelligently with the practitioner in the treatment of illness and in the establishment and maintenance of a regimen of living which will promote the physical and mental health of his family." Such a technical definition of the need for medical care is valid only in a society that, like our own, believes in the desirability of health and in the efficacy of scientific medicine in promoting and maintaining it. Against an entirely different social background, as for example that of modern India, need would represent merely the expression of a narrow professional opinion, and would bear no relation to the actual needs of that society. But since modern America values health and has accepted, in terms of the capacities of modern medicine, the science and art of the need for medical care, the definition would seem both relevant and useful.

It has already been noted that rural areas, as compared with urban ones, have more children, fewer middle-aged people, and a higher percentage of old persons. And, as we have said, the incidence of illness is known to be greatest among children and among the aged — precisely the age groups that predominate in rural areas — while illness strikes least often in the middle-aged group, which is smaller in rural areas, Moreover, the fact that relatively more children are born to rural families than to urban families implies that rural areas have greater needs for medical care.

It is well known that the frequency and duration of illness bear a striking relation to income. And the National Health Survey of 1935–6 confirmed this. The frequency of illnesses that disabled for seven or more consecutive days was highest among relief groups (238 cases per thousand persons per year), and next highest in the income class under $1,000 (180 cases per thousand). For families with incomes between $1,000 and $2,000 the rate was 152 cases per thousand persons, and for those with incomes over $2,000 it was 146 cases per thousand persons. Moreover, in terms of days of disability, the rates per person per year increased progressively as the income declined. Thus, in the $3,000-and-over bracket, the average was 6.75 days; in the $2,000-to-$3,000 group, it was 6.88 days; in the $1,000-to-$2,000 group, 7.52 days; in the group receiving under $1,000, 12.16 days; and in the relief groups, 16.18 days.

The National Health Survey of 1935–6 further included a study of 37,000 rural households, or about 140,000 rural persons in Michigan, Missouri, and Georgia. But only in the study of the rural counties of Missouri and Michigan were the schedules and supervision identical with those used in the general urban study, so that only the figures relating to these areas permit comparisons. These figures, which may be found in Tables 21 and 22, indicate that rural people are probably sick as often, or more often, than urban people. Indeed, with respect to illnesses of a more serious nature, the rural rate is 45 per cent higher than in cities. Thus, not only are malaria, hookworm, and pellagra more prevalent among the rural than among the urban population, but the reported incidence of common communicable diseases of childhood, such as mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, and scarlet fever, is also appreciably higher in the more rural states than in the more urban ones.

TABLE 21

Incidence of Illness: Frequency of Disabling Illness on Day of Survey, and Frequency and Duration of Illness Causing Seven or More Days of Disability, in Rural and Urban Communities, 1935–6

Type or Duration of Illness	Urban Population (83 cities)	Rural Counties in Michigan and Missouri		
		Towns 2,500 to 5,000 *	Villages Under 2,500 and Open Country	Open Country
Disabling illness on day of survey (cases per 1,000)	45	41	49	46
Disabling illness of 7 days or more (cases per 1,000 per yr.)	171	233	250	246
Disabling acute illness of 7 days or more † (cases per 1,000 per yr.)	124	182	191	189
Disabling chronic illness of 7 days or more ‡ (cases per 1,000 per yr.)	47	51	59	57
Days of disability per case of illness of 7 days or more	57	46 §	49 §	48 §
Days of disability per person from illness of 7 days or more	9.8	10.7 ||	12.0 ||	12.0 ||

* One town with a population of 5,120 included.

† Defined as illness disabling for 7 days or more, with total duration of symptoms less than 3 months.

‡ Total duration of symptoms 3 months or more.

§ Based on rural counties of Missouri; Michigan data unavailable.

|| Based on incidence of illness in all counties and duration of illness in Missouri only.

In short, in the open country as well as in the city, good health and good physical condition are in large part the result of the observance of the laws of health rather than the unconscious result of life in the rural environment. Moreover, it is significant that most of the progress in the improvement of health in both the city and the country has come about mainly through leadership exerted in urban centers through definitely urban facilities. The bacteriological laboratory, the general hospital with special facilities, the septic tank, the water filter, the chlorine treatment, the pasteurizing process, the can of kerosene and the sprayer, the screen, the sanitary privy — all these are facilities, processes, and instrumentalities that have been developed by the city specialist.

TABLE 22

Types of Disabling Illness: Number of Cases of Illness Disabling for Seven or More Days per Thousand Persons per Year by Diagnosis in Urban and Rural Areas, 1935–6

Diagnosis Groups	Urban (83 cities)		Rural (Michigan and Missouri)	
All causes		171.4		250.0
Communicable diseases		30.3		41.7
Common communicable diseases of childhood	—		37.9	
Other infections and parasitic diseases	—		3.8	
Diseases of respiratory system		50.1		100.4
Pneumonia	4.6		7.5	
Tonsillitis (including tonsillectomy)	10.2		7.8	
Other diseases of respiratory system	35.2		85.1	
Diseases of the digestive system		12.6		16.5
Appendicitis	5.2		4.4	
Other diseases of digestive system	7.4		12.1	
Puerperal state — live births only		13.9		18.5
Accidents		15.6		15.5
Tuberculosis — all forms		1.3		1.4
Neuroses and mental diseases		5.5		5.6
Rheumatism		5.6		9.1
Degenerative disease		14.4		20.1
Cancer and tumors	1.0		3.2	
Diabetes	0.9		1.0	
Cardiovascular-renal	12.3		14.4	
Bladder and male genito-urinary	—		1.5	
Orthopedic impairments		2.9		2.5
Diseases of ears and mastoid		1.9		1.5
Hernia		1.0		0.7
Teeth, mouth and gums		0.5		0.9
Thyroid		0.6		0.6
Hemorrhoids		0.7		0.7
Skin diseases		2.1		2.4
All other		12.5		11.9

Thus, modern medical practice, in the process of diffusion, has come from the city to the country, and this important fact largely accounts for the obvious lag occurring in the rural areas in the acceptance, promotion, and utilization of the desirable means for achieving modern health services.

Volume of Health Services Received

The preceding section revealed that rural people have at least as much need for medical care as urban people. But the amount of service they receive is indicated by the figures (see Table 23) compiled by the General Morbidity Studies of the National Institute of Health. These figures, based on records for 9,000 families in eighteen states visited periodically between 1928 and 1931, show that the people living in towns of under 5,000 population and in rural areas had fewer doctors' calls than did people living in large cities. In fact, with respect to calls by all types of medical practitioners on account of illness, the rate per thousand persons in cities of over 100,000 population was 34 per cent higher than that for towns of under 5,000 population and rural areas. And it should be remembered that the larger number of doctors' calls per unit of population in the large cities represents a higher percentage of attended cases and more calls per case rather than more illness. Moreover, hospital rates were lower for rural than for urban areas, and higher for large cities than for small towns. In 1938 the physician-population ratio in the most urban states was 171 physicians per hundred thousand persons, or 585 persons per physician, as compared with only 80 physicians per hundred thousand persons, or 1,250 persons per physician in the most rural states.

TABLE 23

Services of Physicians and Other Practitioners in Connection with Illness in Cities of Different Sizes — 7,434 Canvassed White Families in Fourteen States, 1928–31*

	All City Sizes (simple means of rates in the three sizes)	Cities of 100,000 or Over	Cities 5,000 to 100,000	Towns Under 5,000 and Rural Areas
Total illnesses † per 1,000 population	830	795	846	850
Calls ‡ per 1,000 population				
Calls by any practitioner	2,641	3,003	2,679	2,240
Calls by all private physicians and specialists	2,134	2,420	2,233	1,750
Home calls by private general physicians	1,063	1,192	1,168	829
Clinic calls ‡	311	362	245	325
Calls by nonmedical practitioners	196	221	201	165
Calls by all practitioners per total case	3.18	3.78	3.17	2.64
Population under observation	32,686	11,593	8,550	12,543

* The fourteen states were: Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, New York, and California. Annual Rates per 1,000 Population

† All illness, both attended and not attended by doctors.

‡ Calls in connection with illness except that clinic care includes also calls for immunization, well-baby care, and health (including school) examinations.

Source: Collins, Selwyn D., *Frequency and Volume of Doctors' Calls Among Males and Females in 9,000 Families Based on Nation-wide Periodic Canvasses, 1928–31*. Reprint No. 2205, Public Health Reports, Vol. 55, No. 44, Nov. 1, 1940, pp. 1977–2020. Table 2.

The frequency with which certain types of medical care are used also varies greatly between large cities and rural areas. This is particularly true of surgical operations. Operations are performed largely in hospitals, and are more frequent among residents of large cities where hospital facilities and surgical specialists are conveniently available. Dentists, however, are more widely distributed, so that dental care, as compared with specialized medical services, is, at least, geographically within reach of a higher percentage of rural residents. But as may be seen in Table 24, while no difference in the amount of dental care appears between the large and small cities, the rate for rural areas is about half that of the two urban groups.

TABLE 24

*Frequency of All Dental Cases * among Persons of Specific Ages in Cities of Different Sizes and in Rural Areas — 8,758 Canvassed White Families in Eighteen States during Twelve Consecutive Months, 1928–31*

Age	Annual Dental Cases per 1,000 Population			
	Cities of 100,000 or Over	Cities 5,000–100,000	Towns Under 5,000	Rural Areas
All ages †				
Adjusted ‡	313	316	230	159
Crude	307	304	221	155
Under 5	42	38	42	34
5–9	334	293	246	168
10–14	372	387	288	193
15–19	397	391	293	182
20–24	349	351	287	196
25–34	377	329	286	248
35–44	363	352	254	183
45–64	298	430	192	113
65 and over	125	280	95	16

* A dental case is a series of one or more consecutive visits to a dentist in connection with one or more types of service.

† "All ages" includes a few of unknown age.

‡ Adjusted by an indirect method as described by Collins.

Source: Collins, Selwyn D., *Frequency of Dental Services among 9,000 Families, Based on Nationwide Periodic Canvasses 1928–31.* Reprint No. 2058, Public Health Reports, Vol. 54, No. 16, Apr. 21, 1939, pp. 629–657. Table 10.

The variation between rural and urban areas in the pattern of medical care is revealed also by persons in attendance at births, and by places where births occur. In 1944, 12 per cent of all rural births were attended by a midwife, whereas only 2 per cent of urban births were so attended. And during 1942 only 45 per cent of births in rural areas occurred in hospitals, as compared with 84 per cent in cities. This is mainly due to the relative scarcity of hospital facilities in the country plus the large proportion of low-income families, and to a lesser extent to a fear of hospitals. A majority of rural births occurred in hospitals for the first time in 1943, but in that same year 87 per cent of urban births occurred in the hospital. While spot studies indicate that in rural areas midwifery is giving way slowly to the use of the general practitioner, it is still predominant among low-income and isolated families.

Rural Patterns of Health Care

The fact that rural people do not receive as much modern medical care as urban people is due to certain conditions under which they live. In general they live some distance from large urban centers where the modern facilities are concentrated. Moreover, they have lower cash incomes than city people, poorer housing, fewer conveniences, and lower material levels of living. The lower educational level among rural people is also a factor. Family and folk medicine traditionally play a greater role in the health pattern of rural people than in that of urban people. According to a study made in 1941 by Lola Meier and C. E. Lively of the health-service pattern among 258 open-country families in a strictly rural county in the Ozark area of Missouri, dental care for most people was limited to extractions, while 65 per cent of the families claimed that they had not obtained all the dental care they needed or wanted. And although 40 per cent of the families had never had a member in the hospital, 64 per cent felt the need for a hospital that would be nearer to them. Moreover, most of the family illnesses were cared for in the home, with home remedies and patent medicines being used plentifully. Four out of five families reported that they took some measures to prevent sickness. While 16 per cent used dietary measures, 21 per cent used patent medicines, drugs, and home remedies.

Many of the postwar plans in the various states give some consideration to the health problem. Thus, of the preliminary reports on postwar programs submitted by agricultural leaders of forty-six states to the Secretary of Agriculture in 1944, thirty-six contained sections on rural health. Moreover, agreement was complete on the fact that farm people are far below par with respect to health services, and that something needed to be done about it. The specific recommendations most frequently made were: (1) that health units or centers be organized or expanded to meet the needs of farm people; (2) that adequate medical personnel be guaranteed in rural areas; (3) that adequate programs of health education in maternal and child care, accident prevention, and sanitation be provided; (4) that sanitation, equipment, and services, such as school sanitation and public health laboratories be provided; and (5) that public health nursing, education and service programs, periodic medical and dental examinations, and comprehensive immunization be guaranteed.

A majority of the reports advocated prepayment plans for medical care and/or hospitalization. Nine states recommended the use of mobile dental units in sparsely settled areas, and a number proposed the purchase of surplus military supplies in order to improve rural health and sanitation. And eleven state reports specifically recommended public-works projects of two types: (1) the construction of public buildings, that is, hospitals, clinics, and laboratories; and (2) the construction and improvement of sanitary facilities, that is, of facilities for malaria control, water supply, and sewage disposal.

Changing Pattern of Rural Health Care

It used to be that when someone in the family got sick, either home remedies were applied or, in acute conditions, the doctor was called. Furthermore, the doctor usually made home visits, and most of his equipment was in his "black bag." This meant that he spent much of his time going to and from his patients. And because he necessarily lived in close proximity to most of the families he served, his coverage was often no greater than the rural neighborhood. In his effort to spread his services, the rural doctor inevitably shifted from horse and buggy to the automobile. It is not surprising, therefore, that often the first person in the community to own one of the new "horseless carriages" was the country doctor. But before long many families owned automobiles, and today most visits are made by the patient, who goes to the doctor's office or clinic.

Good roads and automobiles, however, are only two of the factors that contributed to this new custom. For, in addition, there is a greater reliance on the physician and a tendency to visit him earlier in cases of sickness. It is not irrelevant, then, that doctors' offices now require elaborate equipment for expert diagnosis. Furthermore, physicians have increasingly tended to settle in towns and cities. Farm families who formerly went to town mainly to shop and sell their produce now go there also to see the doctor and obtain other modern services. For example, in 1947 the rural people in Wheeler County, Texas, could drive to town in cars; stop by the co-operative creamery; trade farm products for feed and seed at their co-operative exchange; stop with their wives at the mechanized laundry and rent equipment that would complete the family wash in a few minutes; attend the weekly livestock auction in a sales barn that was equipped with grandstand seats and electrical sound devices, and was heated on cold days; stop by the cold-storage individual locker plant for needed provisions; visit the hospital, as members of a prepayment plan, for health checkups, drugs, or treatment; and then reach home in time for a favorite radio program coming through windmill-powered receiving sets.

Certainly the present-day farm family is less self-sufficient than farm families were in early times. Today the farmer buys more of the things that go into family living, and medical care is one of the items that requires an increasing amount of cash outlay if high-grade modern service is to be obtained. In fact, 81 per cent of all the typical civilian adults who responded to the University of Denver National Opinion Research Center inquiry in 1944 thought that there were some people who could not afford to see a doctor as often as they should; and 31 per cent said that they themselves put off going to a doctor because of the cost. Furthermore, the doctor himself has been caught up in technological trends that have given rise to the medical specialist, the necessity for complex equipment, and a need for group medical practice. The growth of clinics and hospitals is one result of these changes. As tremendous advances have been made in the science of medicine, increasingly higher standards have been imposed on the smaller medical colleges. As a result, many small and inferior medical schools have been eliminated, and a few large, modern medical institutions have developed. Along with the higher standards of medicine, the doctor is relying more and more on professional organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American and National Dental Associations, and related organizations; and the layman is relying increasingly on public agencies and private organizations.

All of these trends are good for society in general, and the effectiveness of modern health care has increased tremendously. But unfortunately all of these social and economic changes have not been going on at the same pace throughout all segments of the population. For instance, there are the differences in use of modern health care between rural and urban people, between Negro and white families, between North and South, and — perhaps most significant — between low- and high-income families. This situation exists in spite of the fact that actual health needs are greatest among disadvantaged people. One rallying point around which support for any health program can be mustered is the obvious desirability of bringing health services of equally high standards to all the people. The growing recognition that health is not only an individual problem, but a major concern of the entire community, marks an important change in the attitude of the people.

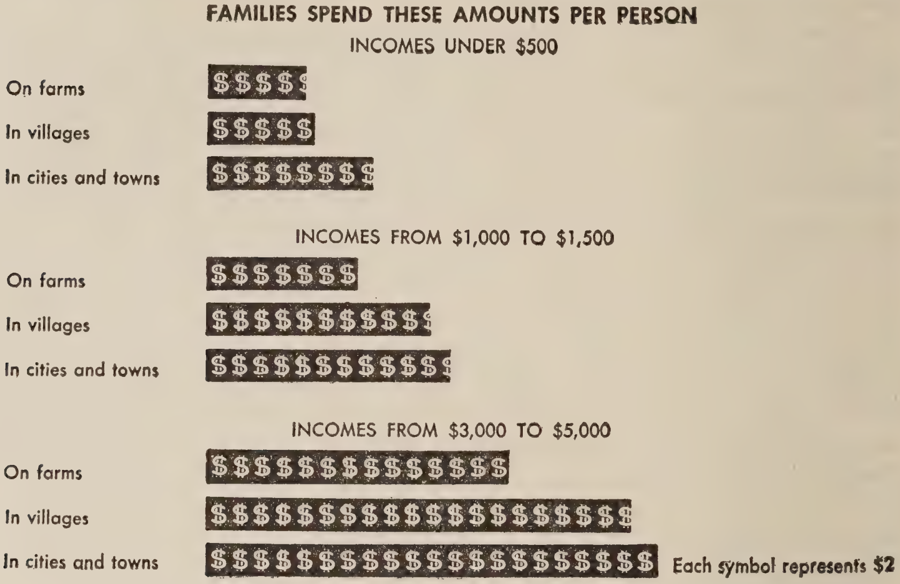


Fig. 9 FARM FAMILIES SPEND LESS THAN URBAN FOR MEDICAL CARE

Although farm families spend somewhat more for medical care than urban families with similar incomes, the expenditure per person is smaller. Farm families are larger than urban families; the money they spend must cover the care of more people.

Many factors interact to determine whether one group of people receives or does not receive adequate health care. First of all, there is the traditional behavior of people in coping with sickness and injury. Families are not prone to drop immediately all their customary ways of dealing with ill health, even when modern medical care is readily available to them. This tendency goes deeper than a matter of personal choice, for it is grounded firmly in the culture of the people. In their value systems most individuals give first place to those practices that have been handed down from their predecessors. Particularly is this true in regard to health care.

In our present money economy the income available to the family is also an important factor — perhaps as important as any other — in assuring adequate health service. For low-income families are not capable of paying for adequate health care, and some have had to rely upon charity or public agencies. Indeed, it has become progressively clear that the high proportion of families who do not receive the quantity and quality of health care that is today possible in this country cannot be explained away by assuming either lack of individual initiative or lack of medical need. Actually, 77 per cent of all the farms in the United States produced less than $1,500 worth of products in 1939. And this unquestionably accounts for much of the inadequate

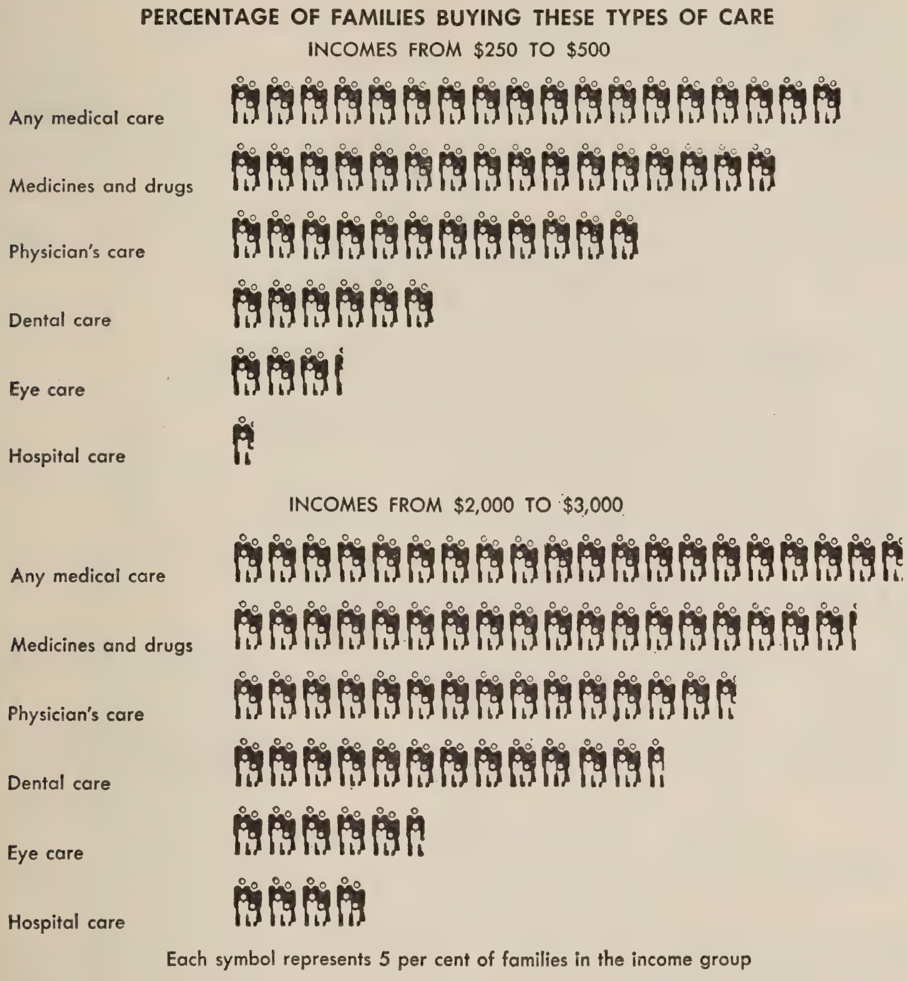


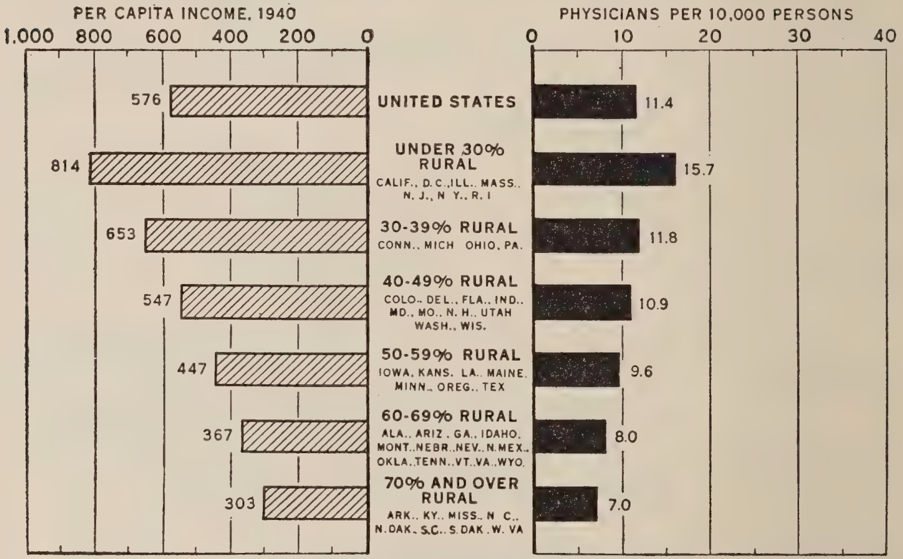
Fig. 10 AS THEIR INCOMES INCREASE, A LARGER PROPORTION OF FARM FAMILIES BUY MEDICAL CARE

Almost all families spend something for medical care in the course of a year, but the percentage of families spending for certain types of care varies with income. Families with low income are less likely to buy some types of care than families in better circumstances. This is particularly true of dental care and hospital care.

quality of health services in many rural areas. In short, the money simply isn't available.

Costs of Medical Care in Rural Areas

A study of expenditures for medical care, covering the year 1941, was made by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics in co-operation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This study revealed several things that are significant in any discussion of rural health. (1) Although farm families spent somewhat more for medical care than urban families with similar incomes, the expenditure per person was smaller. This is due to the fact that farm families are larger than urban families, so that the money they spend must cover the care of more people.[1] (2) As the incomes of farm families rise, they spend more money on medical care, but this amount constitutes a smaller proportion of their total income than the amounts spent by other groups constitute of theirs, while it is about the same proportion of the average living costs of each income group. Almost all families spend something for medical care in the course of a year, but the percentage of families spending for certain types of care varies with income.[2] Thus, low-income families are less likely to buy some types of care than are families in better circumstances. This is particularly true of dental, eye, and hospital



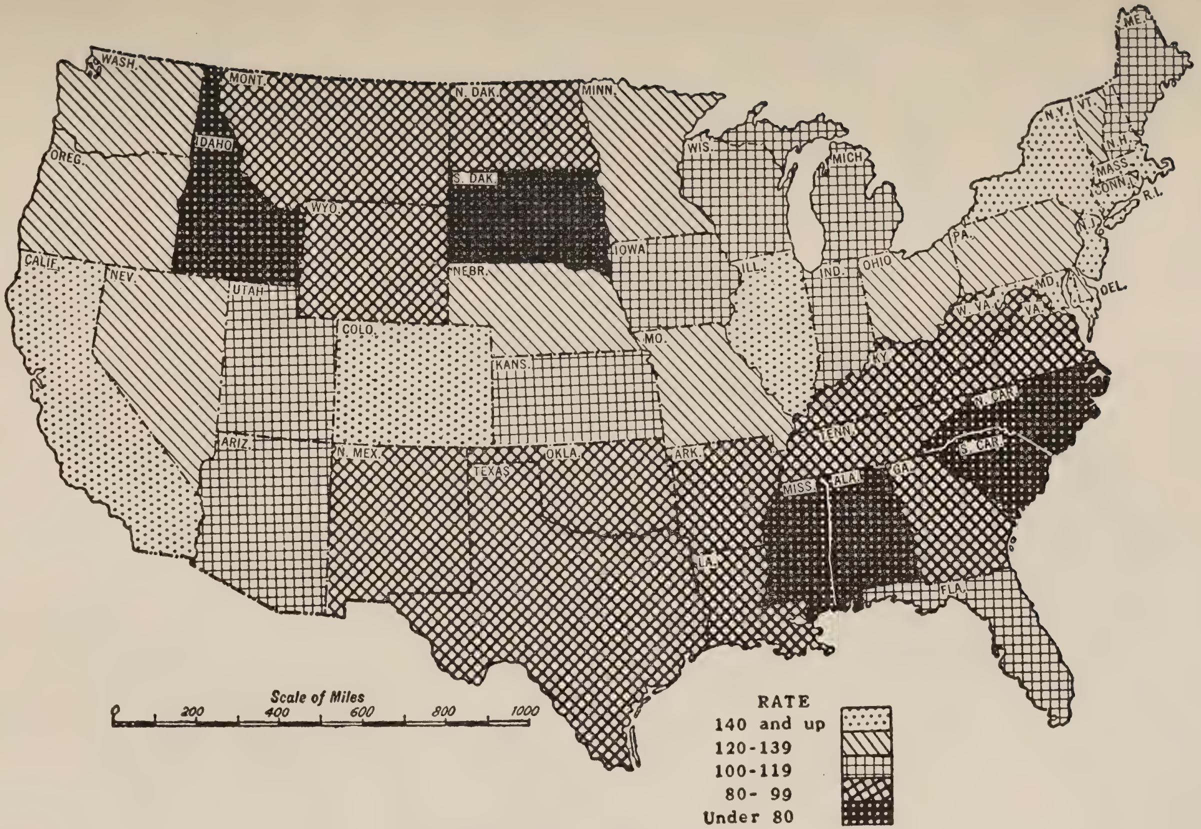
Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 11 NUMBER OF EFFECTIVE PHYSICIANS, 1940

(STATES GROUPED BY PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION, RURAL, SHOWING RATIOS AND RELATIONSHIP TO PER CAPITA INCOME)

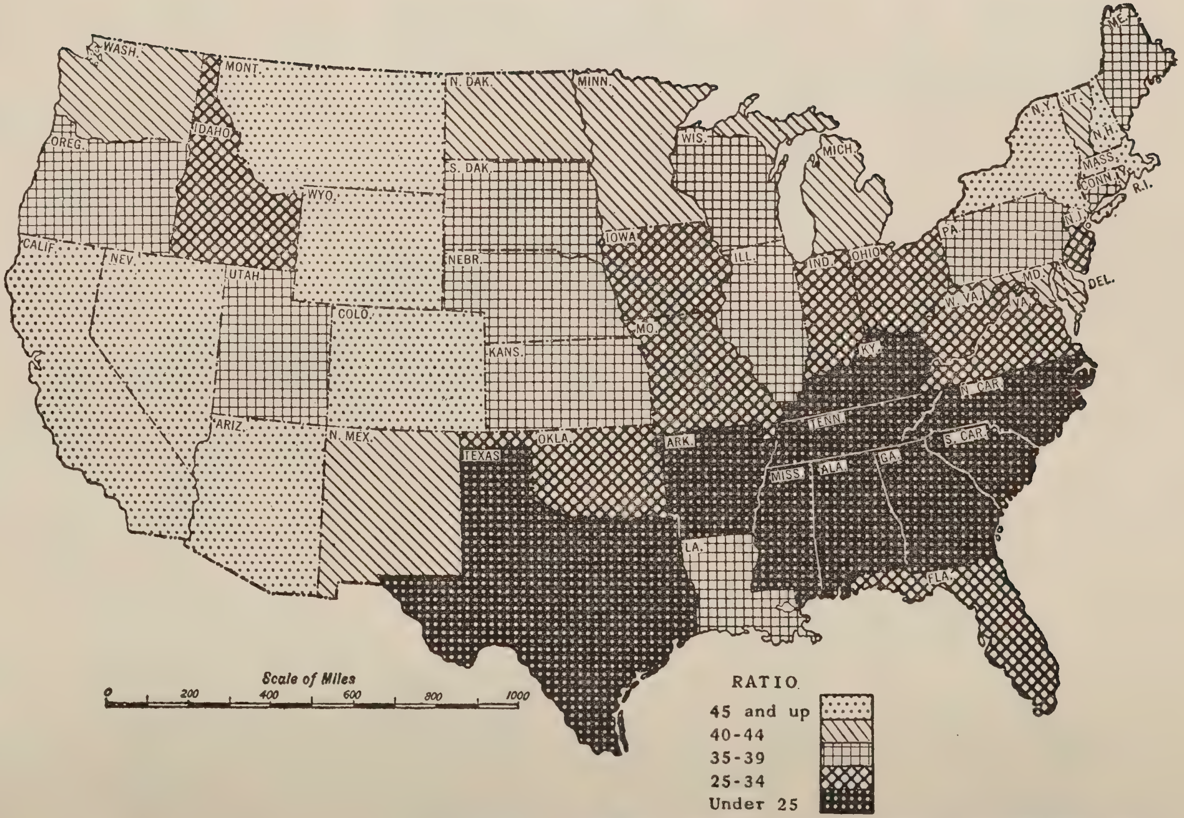
---

[1] See chart (Fig. 9).
[2] See chart (Fig. 10).


WASH.
MONT.
N. DAK.
MINN.
IDAHO
OREG.
WIS.
MICH.
S. DAK.
WYO.
IOWA
CALIF.
NEV.
NEBR.
UTAH
ILL.
IND.
OHIO
PA.
N.Y.
VT.
ME.
N.H.
MASS.
CONN.
R.I.
N.J.
DEL.
MD.
W. VA.
VA.
COLO.
KANS.
MO.
KY.
N. CAR.
TENN.
S. CAR.
ARIZ.
N. MEX.
OKLA.
TEXAS
ARK.
MISS.
ALA.
GA.
LA.
FLA.
Scale of Miles
0
200
400
600
800
1000
RATE
140 and up
120-139
100-119
80- 99
Under 80

Source: N.C. Agricultural Experiment Station, Department of Rural Sociology. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Fig. 12 PHYSICIANS IN THE UNITED STATES
(PER 100,000 POPULATION, 1940)


WASH.
MONT.
N. DAK.
MINN.
OREG.
IDAHO
S. DAK.
WIS.
MICH.
N.Y.
VT.
ME.
N.H.
MASS.
CONN.
R.I.
WYO.
IOWA
CALIF.
NEV.
UTAH
NEBR.
ILL.
IND.
OHIO
PA.
N.J.
DEL.
MD.
W. VA.
VA.
COLO.
KANS.
MO.
KY.
N. CAR.
TENN.
ARIZ.
N. MEX.
OKLA.
ARK.
S. CAR.
TEXAS
MISS.
ALA.
GA.
LA.
FLA.
Scale of Miles
0
200
400
600
800
1000
RATIO
45 and up
40-44
35-39
25-34
Under 25

Source: N.C. Agricultural Experiment Station, Department of Rural Sociology. Based on data from the American Medical Association.

Fig. 13 HOSPITAL BEDS IN THE UNITED STATES
(PER 10,000 POPULATION, 1940)

care. (3) There are marked rural-urban differences in medical care expenditures.[3] In the middle-income group, farm families, in comparison with families in towns and cities, spend a larger part of their medical dollar for physicians' care, medicines and drugs, and eye care. And they spend a smaller part for dental and hospital care and for all other items.

In general, the rural states are also low-income states, and as a result they tend to have fewer health personnel and facilities than urban states. Medical resources are closely related to the purchasing power of the population. And because service has depended primarily on the ability of the individual or family to pay for it, physicians have inevitably settled in areas where the monetary return was highest.[4] The same thing is true for dentists, nurses, and hospitals.

Moreover, while the 289 metropolitan counties (those including cities of 50,000 or more population) plus the 720 counties that border on them constitute less than a third of all the counties in the United States and contain 69.3 per cent of the population, they have 81.3 per cent of the total number of general hospital beds in registered hospitals.[5] Whereas the remaining 30.7 per cent of the population, which is distributed in 2,062 counties, are served by only 18.7 per cent of all general hospital beds. And 1,253 counties, of which 713 have populations of over 10,000, have not a single general hospital registered by the American Medical Association.

Health Organization

It is traditional to associate public health activities with the urban districts of the United States since congested conditions give rise to epidemics and contagion of all sorts. And from a law passed in 1647 to prevent pollution of Boston Harbor to the passage of the Public Health Act of 1944, the trend in health organization has been progressively shifting from individual responsibility to public responsibility. But it was not until the latter half of the 1800's that doctors themselves were sure germs were spread through food and drink and by contact. Only in the twentieth century was it demonstrated that insects played a part in the spread of disease.

The earliest public health measures were undertaken by the local communities, and were directed toward sanitation and the control of communicable diseases rather than toward the provision of medical care. The United States Public Health Service was started in 1912, the same year in which the rural nursing service was begun. But public health departments still play only a minor role in the direct medical care of rural people. Public health work has been organized on a county basis, and in most cases the county has proved to be an effective unit for health organization. The number of county health units with a full-time county or district health officer grew from 606 in 1932 to 1,874 in 1947. In addition to the health officer most of these county health units have a sanitary inspector, a visiting nurse, and a clerk. A staff of this size can render effective public health service in a county of under 25,000 population located in an area of less than five hundred square miles. The health unit personnel conduct health examinations of school children, give immunizations, and carry on various clinics of a specific nature. The nurse teaches hygiene, child care, and first aid in the home, and also serves in emergencies. Other functions of the public health unit include: (1) school inspection; (2) co-ordination of all health services; (3) organization of maternal and infant hygiene measures: (4) treatment of venereal diseases; (5) inspection of milk supplies; (6) inspection of water supplies; and (7) general inspection of public food preparation.

---

[3] See chart (Fig. 11).

[4] See map (Fig. 12).

[5] See map (Fig. 13).

Soon after the rural rehabilitation program started, the Farmers Home Administration, formerly the Farm Security Administration, found that poor health and physical disability were generally associated with economic failure. Subsequently physical examinations of representative groups of borrowers indicated that defects were widespread and serious. Moreover, because of its unpredictable nature insofar as the individual is concerned, acute sickness often disrupted a carefully worked out plan charting a family's course toward economic and social rehabilitation. In any event, two basic problems with respect to health seemed to underly the families' difficulties: (1) a lack of health, sanitation, and medical facilities; and (2) an inability to pay for such facilities. In fact, in certain states 15 to 20 per cent of the complete rehabilitation failures were attributed primarily to ill health. Out of such conditions developed the Farm Security Administration health program, of which the most striking aspects were the medical-, dental-, and hospital-care associations. The objective was to make medical care available to all of the rehabilitation families by providing a mechanism whereby these families might budget a definite amount for medical services. The program grew rapidly, until by 1942 there were 814 medical and 209 dental units in operation in forty-three states. The medical plans covered 111,468 participating families, while an additional 33,045 families were covered by separate dental programs.

The basic principles upon which these plans for medical care have developed have deviated but little from the following principles stated in the 1940–1 annual report of the chief medical officer:

> 1. *Free choice of physician.* The general policy is to develop no medical service plans in a State until a basic working agreement has been reached with the State medical association. Their county or district plans are organized in collaboration with local medical societies. The plans provide for medical society supervision over medical aspects of the program. Enrolled borrowers have free choice of physician from among those participating, usually from among all legally qualified physicians in the area. There is no interference with the personal relationship between physicians and patient.
>
> 2. *Group prepayment.* Family participation dues are paid on an annual basis. Borrowers are often assisted in making such payments, ordinarily through loans. The funds deposited by each family are placed in a pooled or common fund in the hands of a bonded treasurer or trustee, and from

> monthly or quarterly allotments of this fund payments are made to physicians, hospitals, and druggists.
>
> 3. *Family contributions based on average income.* Participation rates are in general commensurate with average incomes of FSA borrowers in the area. The rates for a particular plan depend on the services covered and often upon the size of family as well as upon average income. When a given rate is beyond the ability of a family or a group of families to pay, an effort is made to base the family contribution on its ability to pay and some provision is made for supplementing the amount to the extent necessary.
>
> 4. *Voluntary participation.* The borrowers are never compelled to participate. The local plan is presented to them; whether or not they become members is entirely for their decision. But in most cases economic necessity itself is a compulsion. . . .

Most plans provided that only persons who were Farm Security Administration clients, or who could become clients, were eligible to membership. In a few cases, chiefly in Utah and Montana, local physicians requested and obtained admission to membership for low-income farm families who were not rehabilitation borrowers. In some cases, such as in the Pierre, South Dakota, unit, provision was made to continue the membership of paid-up borrowers. But about 99 per cent of the total membership in all the units were clients of the Farm Security Administration.

During the early years of the program, the medical care provided to families was necessarily limited to what was essential to the treatment of acute illness, although provision was made, insofar as possible, for the correction of chronic defects that were a retarding factor in rehabilitation. And in general, the emphasis in developing the medical care program was to make it cover the widest possible scope of services that could be offered, that is, physician's care, surgeon's care, hospitalization, drugs, and dental care. Thus, of the 111,468 families who were enrolled in medical care programs at the end of the fiscal year 1942, 98 per cent were entitled to physician's care, 64 per cent to surgeon's care, 58 per cent to hospitalization, 42 per cent to drugs, and 14 per cent to dental care. In addition, as we have said, over 30,000 families were covered by separate dental programs.

In the beginning of the medical care program the fees ran from $14 to $20 annually per family. They were low because all of the financing was on a grant or loan basis, with the agency supplying the money. But as services were expanded, the fees were increased somewhat. Annual prepayment was universal, and the rates charged were determined locally according to the type of program, the services offered, and the financial ability of the borrowers. Virtually all membership rates were determined locally by regional, state, and local Farm Security Administration personnel in conference with the physicians concerned.

The Administration also supervised the Department of Agriculture's "experimental" rural health program, under which were established seven county-wide experimental health associations open to all farm families. Federal aid was extended to these associations in order to enable low-income families to participate. In 1942, membership in these prepayment plans totalled 9,287 families or about 42,000 persons.

Starting in the lumbering, mining, and railroad industries, voluntary prepayment plans for medical care have grown remarkably in this country. Moreover, disability-benefit plans designed to provide compensation for loss of earnings during sickness were initiated at about the same time by fraternal organizations, and have continued to grow. But the number of people covered by these plans, particularly the number of rural people, is comparatively small in relation to the need, and the benefits offered are usually limited in scope. Thus, in 1945, while 25 per cent of the population had insurance against one or more items of medical care costs, approximately 75 per cent had no medical care insurance whatsoever. And only about 2.5 per cent of the population had what might be called "comprehensive" coverage, that is, at least doctor's care in hospital, home, and office, plus hospital services. The largest of all voluntary health insurance organizations is the Blue Cross system, which in December 1947 provided hospitalization to about 26,000,000 people. The services included in the general hospital bill are bed, board, operating room, ordinary hospital drugs, and nursing service for a specified period (usually 21 to 30 days) of hospitalized illness.

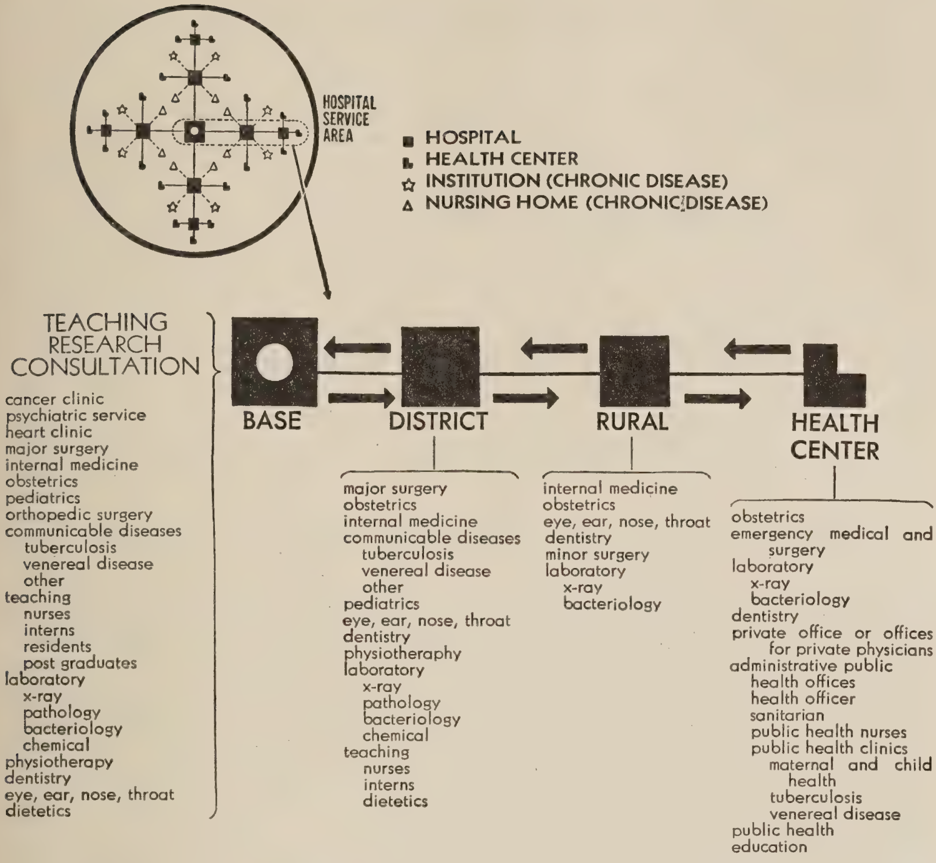
Furthermore, those who do belong to health insurance plans seem to be predominantly from the urban districts, and are usually middle-income families. Indeed, less than 3 per cent of the farm population was covered by any type of health insurance, excluding commercial health and accident insurance policies. The highest proportion of coverage among rural people was in the very lowest income group, a phenomenon that is accounted for by the medical and hospital prepayment plans sponsored by the Farm Security Administration.

The oldest rural co-operative hospital, located in Elk City, Oklahoma, is owned and operated by the Farmers Union Hospital Association. It was established in 1929 through the efforts of Dr. Michael Shadid. In the spring of 1946 it had a membership of 10,000. The services offered include preventive care, dental care at cost, physician calls, and hospitalization at a fee of about $25 per family per year. In 1940 Amherst, Texas, borrowed the pattern and started the South Plains Cooperative Hospital Association. And in July 1943 the Northwest Community Hospital Association opened its own hospital in Mooreland, Oklahoma.

The principle of combining the preventive, diagnostic, and curative services of medicine into a single functional unit, which is then called a medical center, has been advantageously applied on a large scale in certain great university centers and in the Mayo, Lahey, Cute, Ross-Loos, Scott-White, and other group clinics. It is also deemed to be applicable to the smaller-scale needs of rural communities. In line with this principle, Public Law 725, known as the "Hospital Survey and Construction Act," provides for a co-ordinated network of four basic types of medical-center facilities: the small community "health center," the "rural hospital," the "district hospital," and the large "base hospital."[6] The smallest unit – the health center – might in-

---

[6] Chart (Fig. 14) presents a diagram of the scheme.


HOSPITAL SERVICE AREA
■ HOSPITAL
▙ HEALTH CENTER
☆ INSTITUTION (CHRONIC DISEASE)
△ NURSING HOME (CHRONIC DISEASE)
TEACHING
RESEARCH
CONSULTATION
cancer clinic
psychiatric service
heart clinic
major surgery
internal medicine
obstetrics
pediatrics
orthopedic surgery
communicable diseases
tuberculosis
venereal disease
other
teaching
nurses
interns
residents
post graduates
laboratory
x-ray
pathology
bacteriology
chemical
physiotherapy
dentistry
eye, ear, nose, throat
dietetics
BASE
DISTRICT
major surgery
obstetrics
internal medicine
communicable diseases
tuberculosis
venereal disease
other
pediatrics
eye, ear, nose, throat
dentistry
physiotheraphy
laboratory
x-ray
pathology
bacteriology
chemical
teaching
nurses
interns
dietetics
RURAL
internal medicine
obstetrics
eye, ear, nose, throat
dentistry
minor surgery
laboratory
x-ray
bacteriology
HEALTH CENTER
obstetrics
emergency medical and surgery
laboratory
x-ray
bacteriology
dentistry
private office or offices for private physicians
administrative public health offices
health officer
sanitarian
public health nurses
public health clinics
maternal and child health
tuberculosis
venereal disease
public health education

Plan provides for constant exchange between hospitals of information, training, and consultation service, and personnel, and for referral of patients when indicated.

Source: National Health Program, Hearings before the Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. Senate, 79th Congress, Second Session on S. 1606, a bill to provide for a national health program

Fig. 14 COORDINATED HOSPITAL SERVICE PLAN

clude the offices of local physicians and dentists, facilities for emergency medical and surgical work, a few beds for obstetrical care, laboratory facilities for X-ray, blood, and bacteriological procedures, and health department offices and clinics. The rural hospital, located adjacent to a number of health centers, would be larger than the health center and would provide additional basic medical, surgical, obstetrical, and laboratory service. The district hospitals, located so as to serve several of the rural hospitals, would provide many of the specialists' services. In most instances they would also provide training for nurses and instruction for interns. The base hospital would serve as the hub of each major medical service area, and might include a teaching hospital, research laboratories, facilities for institutional care, and opportunities for the study of tuberculosis and of nervous and mental, contagious, orthopedic, and chronic diseases.

CHAPTER 10

RURAL WELFARE

BY LOUIS J. DUCOFF AND MARGARET JARMAN HAGOOD

Handling of Rural Welfare Needs in Early Rural America

THE term "rural welfare" covers, in its broadest sense, rural levels of living and income; protection against economic insecurity; educational, health, and recreational services available to rural people; and even their opportunities for aesthetic, intellectual, and religious activities and experiences. As used in this chapter, however, and especially in the sections dealing with the past, the term is more restricted in its scope. This section deals with the ways in which for many decades communities met, or failed to meet, the needs of persons who, because of youth, old age, physical or mental incapacity, or other circumstances, were unable to support themselves.

From the earliest days of settlement in the United States until relatively recently, only local governments carried on the functions later described as "public assistance." And as in the case of our language, laws, and many other institutions, so in the matter of providing relief for the poor, the methods and practices were borrowed or carried over from the English system. Since it was the English Poor Relief Act (originally passed in 1601 and made a permanent law in 1634) that set the pattern of relief in the United States for several centuries, its main provisions are quoted here:

> (1) For setting to work the Children of all such whose Parents shall not by the Churchwardens and Overseers, or the greater part of them, be thought able to keep and maintain their children;
>
> (2) And also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried (as) having no Means to maintain them, use no ordinary or daily Trade of Life to get their Living by;
>
> (3) And also to raise weekly or otherwise . . . a convenient Stock of Flax, Hemp, Wool, Thread, Iron, and other Ware and Stuff, to set the Poor on work;
>
> (4) And also competent sums of Money for and towards the necessary

> Relief of the Lame, Impotent, Old, Blind, and such other among them being Poor and not able to Work;
>
> (5) And also for putting out of such Children to be Apprentices, to be gathered out of the same Parish, according to the ability of the same Parish;
>
> (6) And to do and execute all other Things, as well as for the disposing of the said Stock, as otherwise concerning the Premises, as to them shall seem convenient.

In England, since the Church of England is the official church of the nation, the church parish was usually the local governmental unit that carried out the Poor Relief Act. In the United States, however, even during the colonial period, the Church of England was not the official church of most of the colonies. In New England the "town," which usually consists of a village and adjacent rural areas, was, and still is, the primary unit of local government, and it was the town officials who adopted and carried out the poor laws. In other parts of the country the type of local unit varied; sometimes it was a township, sometimes a county or a city. After the colonies became independent of England most of the new United States passed poor laws similar to the English Law of 1601, but in all cases it was the responsibility of the local unit of government to carry them out.

The principle of complete local responsibility for care of the indigent and disabled residents of the locality prevailed until fairly recently. One of the advantages claimed for this principle was that the councilmen or other officials charged with administering relief would be personally acquainted with those who sought it, while their own desire to keep their local tax rate down would make them alert to detect false claims as well as anxious in other ways to meet needs as economically as possible. The principle also fitted in with the early American general tenets that there should be a high degree of local autonomy and that each locality should care for its own problems and foot its own bills.

The record of how complete local responsibility for public welfare worked in the United States makes clear the disadvantages of the principle. First of all, most local units were not large enough to provide adequate facilities for meeting the different types of needs of the various classes of persons who sought aid. Insane people were housed in jails, barns, cages, and the violent ones were sometimes chained to posts by iron collars. There were no hospital facilities for the ill and disabled poor. Orphans, the feebleminded, and the insane were in many instances farmed out at auction to the bidder who named the lowest price for keeping them.

There were numerous other disadvantages in this complete local responsibility. The desire to keep the local tax rate down led in most cases to inadequate amounts of aid being granted — amounts exceedingly inadequate if judged by modern standards — and, since each local unit could handle its problems as it saw fit, there was no uniformity of standards or practices in relief of the needy. Moreover, tied in with local responsibility for meeting needs was the development of "settlement" requirements as prerequisites to receiving public aid from a local unit, so that in many areas provisions were enacted that impeded free movement of people. For example, in 1767 the province of Massachusetts passed a law stating that no one moving into a town of that colony could gain an "inhabitancy" by any length of residence unless his request to dwell there was approved by a town meeting, and that persons not so approved were liable to be sent back to the town from which they had come.

Both in England and in this country the early poor laws were adopted in order to repress begging and minimize the cost of the poor to the community, rather than to supply adequate aid and care to the disadvantaged groups. From colonial days to the present there has been a gradual development — although by no means steady, and at times interrupted by backward steps — in the recognition and partial implementation of a democracy's responsibility to provide adequately for its disadvantaged groups, and, even more recently, of its duty to prevent the occurrence of the circumstances that create such groups. In reviewing the record of the earlier days, it must be remembered that the earlier practices much more nearly met the responsibilities that were recognized in those days than they would meet those currently recognized, for standards of public responsibility for the handicapped and needy have been raised and broadened during the centuries of the country's development.

The part played in earlier America by informal aid provided by neighbors and church groups has often been emphasized. If parents died, neighbors often took the orphaned children and brought them up with their own. If a house burned down, neighbors would often join in a "house-raising." But this mutual aid of neighbors took place mainly among families of the same general economic status, rather than being extended to so-called "paupers" by families who were economically independent. It was thus not really relief to the disadvantaged so much as it was a form of mutual insurance.

Church members and groups were encouraged to visit and take gifts to the sick and poor as acts of charity, and in such provisions as were made for the disadvantaged groups in early America, this voluntary charitable aid given by individuals and church groups was very important. Adequate statistics are not available on the number of destitute, insane, orphaned, and disabled there were in earlier days, nor on the amount of public or private funds expended for their relief; but various investigations carried on in the first half of the nineteenth century clearly reveal that there were many whose needs went unmet.

Development of State Institutions, Boards, and Departments

As the country matured and the structure of its governmental organization grew more complex, the machinery for meeting welfare needs slowly evolved. It is not easy to trace the history of the handling of welfare functions, since it varied by states and was often grouped with other functions, such as the treatment of criminals. But the general trends of the evolution are clear. The undifferentiated lumping of the poor, orphans, and insane into a town jail or a county poorhouse was gradually replaced by provision of specialized institutions for special groups of needy persons. Along with this development went the gradual provision of institutions that served wider geographic areas, such as groups of counties or a whole state, and so made possible the greater degree of specialization. While the larger cities often set up institutions for the care of special disadvantaged groups in their own populations, the rural population was relieved mainly by the new state institutions.

A vivid and moving account of the contemporary status of the treatment of the insane was presented by the great humanitarian Dorothea L. Dix in a memorial to the Congress of the United States in 1848. Reporting on observations made during extensive travels throughout the country (involving 60,000 miles in eight years and visits to all but three of the states then comprising the Union), she deplored the lack of adequate care for an estimated total in the country of 22,000 insane and feeble-minded persons, and maintained that the twenty existing state hospitals for the insane could not accommodate *one twelfth* of the cases of insanity requiring prompt remedial care. Wrote Dorothea Dix:

> I have myself seen *more than nine thousand idiots, epileptics, and insane, in these United States, destitute of appropriate care and protection;* and of this vast and most miserable company, sought out in *jails,* in *poorhouses,* and in *private dwellings,* there have been hundreds, nay rather thousands, bound with galling chains, bowed beneath fetters and heavy iron balls, attached to drag-chains, lacerated with ropes, scourged with rods, and terrified beneath storms of profane execrations and cruel blows; now subject to jibes, and scorn, and torturing kicks — now abandoned to the most loathsome necessities, or subject to the vilest and most outrageous violations. These are strong terms, but language fails to convey the astounding truths. I proceed to verify this assertion, commencing with the State of Maine. I will be ready to specify the towns and districts where each example quoted did exist, or exists still.

The memorial included a warning that "Statesmen, politicians, and merchants are particularly liable to insanity." It ended with a plea that Congress grant to the thirty states of the Union five million acres of publicly held land to be used to support state institutions for the insane. So powerful was the plea that both houses of Congress passed a bill granting ten million acres of land for this purpose. The bill was vetoed, however, by President Pierce, who stated: "I cannot find any authority in the Constitution for making the Federal Government the great almoner of public charity throughout the United States." This veto stopped for many decades any developments along the line of federal participation in public aid to the needy. But the various states continued to build institutions for the insane, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and for delinquent youth. (The majority of the orphanages that were created were privately controlled, most frequently by church bodies or fraternal organizations.) General provision for the poor, other than these special classes who were able to enter some state or private institution, was still, however, left almost entirely to the local unit of government.

The latter part of the nineteenth century was marked by humanistic reform movements both in this country and abroad. In 1873 the National Conference of Charities and Corrections was founded; in 1917 it became the National Conference of Social Work. Annual meetings and discussions by this conference of public-spirited citizens, state officials, officials of private charitable organizations, and, later, of professionally trained social workers, gave impetus to many reforms and improvements in the methods of meeting welfare needs.

Massachusetts established the first state board of charities and corrections in 1863; ten additional states did so within the next decade; and within another fifty years all except ten states had followed suit. The early state boards were generally supervisory in character, having little or no administrative responsibility, and were composed of lay members. Although their particular responsibilities varied from state to state, they were generally required to report annually on all state institutions of charity, reform, and correction, and to recommend such changes and additional provisions as they deemed necessary. In some cases these boards had supervisory responsibility over the outdoor relief [1] provided by local governmental units.

As might be expected, these supervisory boards gradually took on more and more administrative responsibility, and many of them came to be boards of actual control over the state institutions. For a number of decades there was heated debate concerning the relative merits of different plans of organization. Illinois led the way, in 1917, by reorganizing its state government so that it included a state department of public welfare. Most states followed this plan within the next fifteen years, and the term "public welfare," rather than the older "charities and corrections," was usually used to designate the newly created departments.

Throughout the period between 1863, when the first state board was set up, and 1932 there was slow but definite progress in obtaining more efficient administration of state welfare activities and in raising the standards of the care that was provided. Especially after 1917 there was a broadening of the concept of "public welfare," at least in the minds of the leaders in the field of public welfare administration and professional training. In 1925 "public welfare" was defined by Howard W. Odum, the noted sociologist, as "that very definite service of democratic government which provides organization, technique, and means for making democracy effective in the unequal places — effective in extended application as well as in ideals, written laws and statutes, and in constitutional provisions." Table 25 presents a summary, prepared in 1932 by the President's Committee on Recent Social Trends in the United States, of the changing concepts, ideals, and practices in public welfare administration and procedure. It is significant, however, that, as this Committee reported, in 1928 the Federal government's expenditures for public welfare, aside from aid to veterans, were still very small. Of the costs of ordinary public welfare activities for that year, 41 per cent was borne by states, 25 per cent by cities of 30,000 or more population, and 26 per cent by counties.

---

[1] "Outdoor relief" is a term used to distinguish relief not supplied through institutionalization from institutional or "indoor relief."

TABLE 25

Changing Concepts, Ideals and Practices in Public Welfare Administration and Procedure

Relief

Older Concepts and Practice	Present Ideals and Trends
Paupers boarded out to the lowest bidder.	Special homes and supervised outdoor relief.
Unclassified local almshouses and workhouses as principal means of care.	Classified almshouses only an adjunct to other forms.
Supervisory state board of charity.	Administrative state departments of public welfare.
Indiscriminate giving and eligibility tests.	Adequacy in relief given upon analysis of the need.
Little attention given to the individual.	Emphasis upon case study and individualization.
Goal remedial or to prevent voluntary pauperism from taking root.	Constructive planning for rehabilitation and prevention.
Private and public agencies competitors.	Private agencies supplement through experimentation.
Haphazard, wasteful methods.	Increasing economic emphasis.
Institutional isolation and physical custody.	Community cooperation and social treatment.
No supervision of administration of outdoor relief.	Public outdoor relief administered through trained case worker under state supervision.
Local indoor relief without state supervision.	Administered by local unit but supervised by the state.
No social planning for mother or child.	Tendency to give mothers' aid in their own homes.
Children placed in institutions.	Forty-six states provide for mothers' aid.
Aged given doles and almshouse.	Tendency toward scientific solution with old age pensions and group insurance.

Penology

Older Concepts and Practice	Present Ideals and Trends
Promiscuous herding of prison inmates with little attention to individuals.	Special classification of all prisoners and individuation of treatment.
Little purposeful work on behalf of individuals in jails.	Development of probation, parole and special institutions.
Poor conditions for health and sanitation.	Special attention to health conditions and hygiene.
No system for appraising the offender.	Mental and physical examinations.
Few records of individual histories.	Adequate records of history of individuals.
Punishment for vengeance or repression.	Planning for rehabilitation and prevention.
Policy based upon prejudice and emotion.	Scientific study and accurate knowledge the guide.
Jail and house of correction.	Reformatory and classified farm colony.
Prisoner sentenced and treated on basis of crime alone.	Scientific appraisal of offender's specific needs.
Definite sentence with unconditional release.	Indeterminate sentences with probation and parole.
Solitary confinement and no provision of employment.	Provision for training and work and earnings given to prisoner on his release.
Prisoners farmed out to contractor or lessee.	Special work with occupational therapy.

TABLE 25 (Continued)

THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

Older Concepts and Practice	Present Ideals and Trends
The insane looked upon as outcasts and insanity as a disgrace.	Insanity looked upon as disease or mental sickness.
Insanity judged only by its outward manifestations.	Establishment of psychopathic hospitals.
Mechanical restraints and repression.	Individual treatment, non-restraint and occupational therapy.
Medical treatment chiefly blood letting, sedatives and cathartics.	Good food, massages, gentle gymnastics and physical exercise.
Detention in jails and almshouses; congregate plan.	State program of colony or cottage plan with therapeutic occupation.
Custody the sole purpose of institutions.	Purpose curative so far as possible.
Committed at trial by "jury of peers."	Legal commitment but with expert medical advice.
Individual committed only when he becomes deranged and a danger to the community.	Early discovery and commitment for adequate treatment.
Attitudes and treatment sentimental, pseudo-moral or mystical.	Scientific attitude and treatment of the mental defective.
Cause attributed to a mystery; lower types supposedly possessed of the devil.	Search for cause and effect by public institutions and research through clinics and other means.
Feeble minded classified with the insane and almshouse poor.	Separate classification for the feeble minded.
Unsegregated in poorhouse, jail or other local units.	Segregation in farm colony or special institution.
Mass institutional grouping.	Graded division in colony system.
Custody and restraint the main functions of institutions.	Classification, training and treatment rather than custodial care.
Education based on idea of backwardness and the usual curriculum followed.	Special vocational training or occupational therapy for defectives.
Discovery by chance and emergency.	Discovery through routine examination, reports, state censuses, etc.
No attention given to propagation of defectives.	Research to determine defective strains and definite policies to prevent increase.

CHILDREN

Older Concepts and Practice	Present Ideals and Trends
Motives in child care: pity for his condition or salvaging the child from becoming a pauper in the future.	Scientific appreciation of the fact that children are the true determiners of the future.
Unclassified workhouse, poorhouse or orphans' home care of the dependent child.	Segregated care and vocational training for the handicapped with individual treatment and preventive social work.
Children boarded out, apprenticed, indentured or cared for in institutions.	Tendency toward scientific process of home finding placement and supervision.
Subsidization of private orphanages with local care only.	State subsidy not approved; child care lodged in state departments.
Illegitimate child without rights.	Tendency to consider the illegitimate child the ward of the state.
Blind and deaf children neglected or in almshouses.	Educational facilities for vocational training of the blind and deaf.

TABLE 25 (Continued)

Older Concepts and Practice	Present Ideals and Trends
Crippled children neglected or in almshouses.	Medical attention and special training for crippled children in hospital boarding schools.
Feeble minded children in almshouses.	Custodial and educational colonies for feeble minded.
The delinquent child dealt with as criminal.	Dealt with as salvable individual.
Delinquent child tried in criminal courts and same sentences given as for adults.	Juvenile courts where procedure is informal and private and treatment special.
Fixed sentence for delinquent youth.	Probation, parole, indeterminate sentence.
Prearranged penalties and treatment.	Individual treatment with emphasis placed upon the needs of the child and not upon the act.
Punishment and custody the chief emphasis.	Re-education and prevention the chief emphasis.

Source: By permission from *Recent Social Trends in the United States* by Research Committee on Social Trends, Inc., Copyrighted 1934. Whittlesey House, a division of McGraw-Hill Book Co.

Federal Government Participation in Meeting Welfare Needs

The great depression, heralded by the stock-market crash late in 1929 and lasting through most of the 1930's, threw on the state and local public welfare units relief burdens of a magnitude far beyond what their resources could meet. First as an emergency measure, and later on a permanent basis, the federal government entered the public welfare field. As a consequence, during the New Deal Administration of President Roosevelt, which began in 1933, public welfare functions in the United States were revolutionized.

Although this chapter is to be focused primarily on the problems of *rural* welfare, it becomes difficult, once the states began creating institutions for their inhabitants regardless of the county of residence, to separate entirely the welfare aids and services for rural and urban residents. And after the federal government inaugurated its tremendous relief programs in the 1930's, it became impossible to treat realistically the provision of aid to rural people apart from the over-all national developments in public welfare. While there were relief programs specially created for aiding farmers, their effect on the rural population was not so great as that of the general- and work-relief programs developed for the entire population, whether rural or urban.

During the first part of the depression little was done by the federal government in the matter of providing relief. Then in the last half of 1932 the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was set up to grant "advances" to states to be used for direct and work relief. When in 1933 the new administration took over the reins of the government, tremendous programs had to be speedily inaugurated to meet the most critical unemployment situation ever faced in the nation's history. It is estimated that by February 1934 some 28 million persons, out of a total population of 126 million, were benefiting from some form of public aid.

In the first half of 1932 only about 1 per cent of the rural families in the United States were receiving assistance under state poor laws. After the federal government advanced money to the states the rural relief load rose rapidly and by March 1933 reached about 1,250,000 rural families. After the federal government began making direct grants for relief there were still further increases, while the severe drought that occurred in important agricultural areas of the country in 1934 augmented rural relief needs. The peak was reached in January 1935, when two million rural families, which meant about one out of every six, and which encompassed about 8,500,000 persons, were receiving relief.

Special studies made by the Works Progress Administration provide information on the characteristics of rural households that were on relief in 1935. These families had a greater than average number of children, since many of them came from normally low income groups whose birth rates are characteristically high. About 30 per cent of all the rural persons on relief were workers who were unemployed, and in February of that year 31 per cent of all rural workers on relief were farm operators by usual occupation, and 29 per cent were farm laborers. Farm laborers had managed, on the average, to stay off relief for only three months after losing their jobs, while farm owners had remained off relief rolls for sixteen months after losing their farms. About one fourth of all the rural families on relief had moved into the country within the ten years preceding 1935.

During the early years of federal relief the local public welfare units in rural areas were generally inadequately staffed. In counties without large cities the lack of sufficient numbers of trained workers, and the difficulty of visiting families who lived some distance from the county seat, meant that, on the whole, rural people received less adequate welfare services during the depression than urban people received. The average sizes of rural relief grants during 1934–36 were from $10 to $18 per month, while they were from $20 to $36 per month in urban areas. These differentials were due in part to the fact that a larger proportion of the grants made to the rural population were made to persons with some employment (mainly farmers), in which cases the grants were smaller; and in part to the fact that a higher proportion of the rural population than of the urban was in the South, where the grants were lower than they were in the North and West.

Although variations existed among states and counties, the fact that federal aid was involved meant that a great many uniformities in public welfare standards and practices were introduced throughout the country; and that every local unit, in order to qualify for receiving the federal aid, had to come up to certain specified criteria in their practices. Thus further advances were made in overcoming some of the disadvantages that arose from complete local responsibility for public welfare in earlier days. Since states and counties, however, still bore a share of the costs of the relief program inaugurated in the 1930's, the elimination of the disadvantages was by no means complete. The grant was almost always lower than the amount required for a minimum adequate level of living, while the variations in relief policies tended to produce migration to areas with higher standards, which in turn led to greater emphasis on residence requirements and settlement laws. The migration of farm people during this decade and the increase in the number of migratory farm workers are discussed in another chapter, but it is important to note here that there are still great variations among states in residence requirements for receipt of most types of public aid.

The lasting effects of the depression which caused entrance of the federal government into the field of public welfare are of great significance. Most important was the shift from President Pierce's interpretation of the Constitution in 1854 to a policy that recognized public welfare as a responsibility of the federal government as well as of state and local governments. It is important also that welfare units were organized at each level of government. As a result, state, county, and city departments of public welfare are set up throughout the country, are staffed with increasingly better trained professional personnel, are handling current welfare needs far more adequately than they were handled before the 1930's, and could be expanded should local, regional, or national need arise.

Exceedingly important for the majority of the population, even though less important for farmers and hired farm workers, was the enactment of the permanent Social Security Act of 1935 and the amendments to it in later years. The Act provided for: (1) federal and state public assistance to the needy aged, needy blind, and needy dependent children; (2) grants for maternal and child welfare; (3) vocational rehabilitation for the physically disabled; (4) old-age and survivors' insurance; and (5) unemployment compensation. Agricultural workers — both farm operators and hired workers — were specifically excluded from receiving benefits provided for by the last two of these provisions, unless they also work in industries covered by the Act long enough to acquire and maintain rights as workers in those industries.

Agricultural workers were excluded from old-age insurance and unemployment compensation because of a fear that administrative problems of more than ordinary difficulty might arise. On the basis of ten years of experience in administering the Act, however, the Social Security Board has indicated in its recent reports that practical solutions have been developed for the problems involved in administering social insurance for farmers and hired farm workers. The Social Security Administration now officially recommends, therefore, that the Act be broadened to include farm operators and hired farm workers in the social insurance program.

Even though agricultural workers were excluded from the *insurance* benefits of the Social Security Act, the rural population still gained tremendously from the provisions for the three types of public *assistance*. Especially in the South, where average earnings throughout the span of life during which farm people can work are so low that the accumulation of savings for retirement is difficult, the old-age assistance payments are of great importance to the farm population. But since the three types of assistance require matching of federal with state funds, there is a considerable amount of vari-

TABLE 26

Average Monthly Payment to Recipients of Special Types of Public Assistance in June 1945, and Proportion of Population Rural in 1940, by States

State	Proportion of Population Rural in 1940	Average Monthly Payment to Recipients, June 1945		
		Old-Age Assistance	Aid to Dependent Children (per family)	Aid to the Blind
	Per Cent	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
UNITED STATES	43.5	29.46	47.46	30.27
Northeast				
Maine	59.5	29.59	63.71	30.62
New Hampshire	42.4	30.03	68.37	30.73
Vermont	65.7	22.30	34.51	28.49
Massachusetts	10.6	42.76	80.32	44.39
Rhode Island	8.4	33.67	67.85	31.39
Connecticut	32.2	36.73	77.39	35.72
New York	17.2	34.79	74.58	39.13
New Jersey	18.4	31.74	58.52	33.46
Pennsylvania	33.5	30.00	63.71	—
North Central				
Ohio	33.2	29.85	54.27	27.00
Indiana	44.9	25.61	36.47	29.66
Illinois	26.4	31.93	49.87	33.73
Michigan	34.3	30.65	60.25	34.46
Wisconsin	46.5	29.14	54.92	29.36
Minnesota	50.2	30.12	41.91	37.68
Iowa	57.3	31.72	27.21	33.11
Missouri	48.2	23.36	37.72	—
North Dakota	79.4	33.32	54.96	32.33
South Dakota	75.4	24.53	40.41	22.15
Nebraska	60.9	28.74	32.79	29.34
Kansas	58.1	28.82	49.13	31.20
South				
Delaware	47.7	15.84	67.88	—
Maryland	40.7	27.77	37.53	31.22
Virginia	64.7	13.70	29.56	18.14
West Virginia	71.9	17.98	32.67	20.98
North Carolina	72.7	12.50	24.79	18.63
South Carolina	75.5	14.14	24.18	20.24
Georgia	65.6	11.42	24.96	14.15
Florida	44.9	28.88	33.50	29.95
Kentucky	70.2	11.46	21.72	12.96
Tennessee	64.8	16.08	30.23	19.99
Alabama	69.8	15.51	25.04	15.93
Mississippi	80.2	15.42	25.91	22.18
Arkansas	77.8	17.99	28.69	19.87
Louisiana	58.5	23.65	44.71	27.25
Oklahoma	62.4	29.27	34.16	34.37
Texas	54.6	23.90	20.80	24.36
West				
Montana	62.2	31.10	45.13	34.44
Idaho	66.3	30.22	36.44	31.44
Wyoming	62.7	36.30	59.47	38.89
Colorado	47.4	41.35	53.22	36.67
New Mexico	66.8	31.81	38.56	29.00
Arizona	65.2	38.55	39.52	46.01
Utah	44.5	38.73	73.24	38.90
Nevada	60.7	38.42	—	—
Washington	46.9	48.29	90.20	54.12
Oregon	51.2	35.37	79.46	46.25
California	29.0	47.32	81.20	47.77

Source: Compiled from 10th Annual Report of the Social Security Board, 1945, and Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population.

ation among the states in the size of grants made to the individuals covered. Table 26 shows the average monthly payments made to recipients of public assistance under plans approved by the Social Security Board, along with the proportion of the population that is rural in each state. It is readily apparent that grants are generally lowest in the rural South and highest in the West and the industrialized part of the Northeast.

When the Social Security Act went into effect the federal government assumed the financial obligation to match state and local grants to the aged, the blind, and dependent children, but except for work relief (WPA, NYA, etc.), it withdrew from the field of "general" relief. Thus again the complete responsibility for general assistance to those who do not qualify for one of the special types of relief went back to the states and localities. In fact, in 1945, local governmental units bore the entire costs of general assistance in fifteen states, and a majority of the costs in fourteen other states. The lack of federal participation in general assistance, and the limited degree of state participation in many states, means that generally such needs are less adequately met than are the needs of those who qualify for aid under one of the specialized assistance programs. Since farmers and other rural people qualify less often than urban people for benefits under the social insurance program, the rural population suffers more than the urban from the inadequacy of general assistance grants.

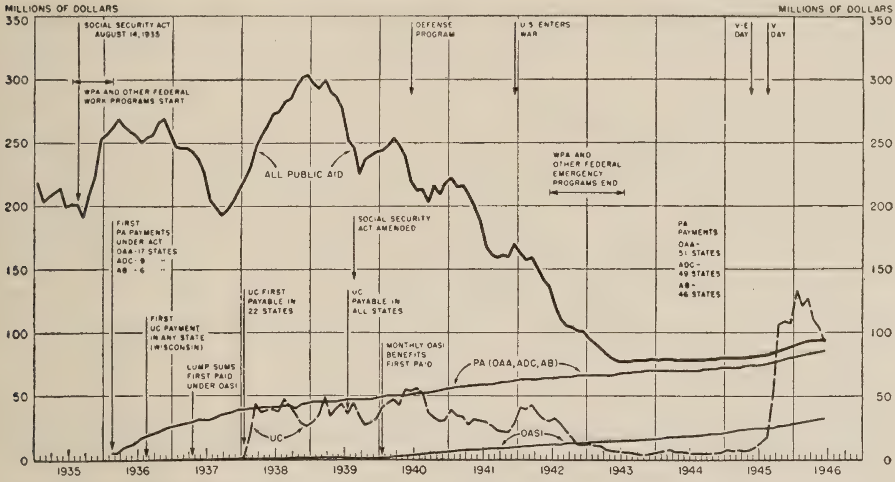


Fig. 15 PAYMENTS FOR PUBLIC AID, ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL INSURANCE UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

[January 1935–June 1946]

The line for all public aid includes: Public Assistance (PA), which consists of Old-Age Assistance (OAA), Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), and Aid to the Blind (AB), but it does not include Unemployment Compensation (UC) or Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), since both of these are considered social insurance rather than public aid.

Eligibility requirements for general assistance are set by states and localities, and in many cases involve legal settlement in a locality. The settlement laws vary from state to state. This means that obtaining general relief is especially difficult for one segment of the agricultural population: the migratory farm workers. These workers often cannot meet residence requirements, and in some cases, because of absence, they lose their original settlement without gaining a new settlement. And yet, because of intermittent employment, and exclusion from the unemployment compensation program, migrant farm workers more often need general relief than the stable resident population does.

When the outbreak of World War II in Europe led to a national defense program in this country, there was a general pickup in economic activity, employment opportunities increased rapidly, and unemployment and the relief load decreased. Soon after the United States entered the war the number of unemployed was less than one million — a marked contrast to the average of about ten million unemployed during the entire decade from 1930 to 1940. The decrease in unemployment of course led to a great reduction in the number of persons needing general relief. Various trends and shifts took place between 1935 and 1946 in the volume and nature of public-aid programs, and in the social insurances.[2] The most important of these trends and shifts were:

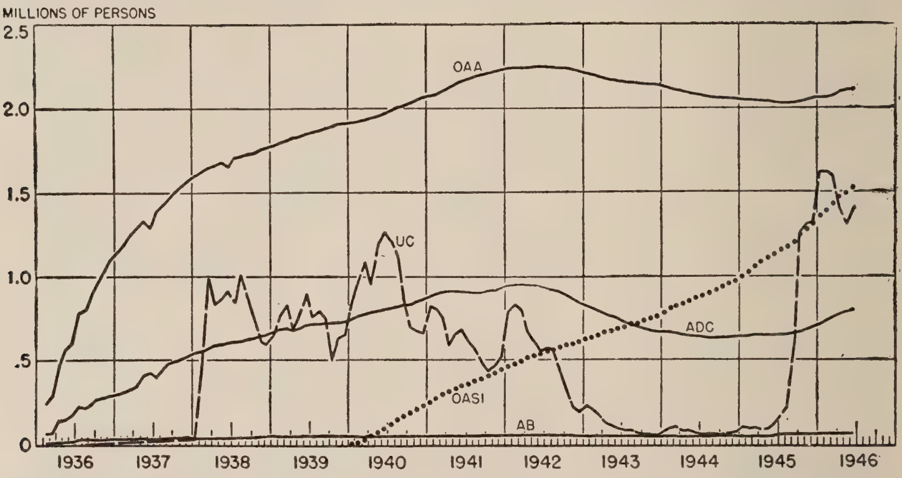


Fig. 16 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS AND SOCIAL INSURANCE BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT, FEBRUARY 1936–JUNE 1946

Forms of Public Assistance
OAA—Old-Age Assistance
ADC—Aid to Dependent Children
AB—Aid to the Blind

Forms of Social Insurance
UC—Unemployment Compensation
OASI—Old-Age and Survivors Insurance

(1) Reduction in the total relief load as unemployment declined after 1939;

(2) Shifts in the nature of relief provided, from general assistance to dif-

---

[2] See charts (Figs. 15 and 16).

ferentiated types of assistance for special categories, that is, work relief for unemployed workers, old-age assistance for persons sixty-five years of age and over without other means of support, aid to dependent children, aimed to keep fatherless children with their mothers, and appropriate help for the blind;

(3) Substitution of social insurance (which provides payments to individuals without requiring proof of need) for public aid or assistance in the case of unemployed persons or persons sixty-five years of age and over who have been employed in occupations covered by the insurance programs (agricultural workers, both farmers and farm laborers, are specifically excluded from the old-age and survivors' insurance and from the unemployment compensation programs).

As wartime conditions lightened the relief load, the county public welfare units, most of which had been set up during the depression, naturally altered their program of services. The number of professionally trained public welfare workers employed by local units had never been sufficient during the years of high relief loads, and the reduction of the load meant that standards of service could rise. During the war local public welfare units, in addition to administering the special types of assistance mentioned above, helped the local Selective Service Boards by obtaining social case histories and by providing special services to the families of men in the armed forces. When the war ended, reconversion and demobilization caused some rise in unemployment, which led to an increase in the need for public assistance. The payment of unemployment insurance benefits and the administration of various types of aid to veterans are not handled, however, by local public welfare departments, but, rather, by offices of the state employment services and the Veterans Administration.

Prospective Developments in Meeting Rural Welfare Needs

The progress in public welfare made by the United States since 1932 was probably greater than all that had been made since the earliest colonial days up to that time, even though some of the advances made during the period, such as federal participation in general assistance and federal operation of the Employment Service, have not been retained. Avenues by which further progress may be made have already been envisioned; laws aimed toward this further progress have been proposed; and in some cases preliminary legislation has been enacted. In general, the progressive steps that have been proposed in recent years point in the following directions:

(1) Improvement of existing assistance and insurance programs so that they will meet more adequately the types of welfare needs for which they are designed; among other things, this may require further assumption of responsibility on the part of the federal government with respect to general assistance and unemployment insurance;

(2) Extension of existing social insurance programs to cover groups, such as agricultural workers, now excluded;

> (3) Inauguration of new types of programs to provide services, either on a social insurance basis or otherwise, not previously offered (except in some cases to the indigent); this includes such matters as medical and hospital insurance, disability insurance, child guidance clinics, vocational training and guidance, and similar developments in the fields of health and education;
>
> (4) Development of national policies and programs to *prevent* the occurrence of unemployment, and to reduce the existing types of substandard employment; the Employment Act of 1946 represents a preventive step, while proposed amendments to raise the minimum wage and to extend the coverage of the Fair Labor Standards Act represent efforts to eliminate in some industries and reduce in others the occurrence of employment at substandard wage rates.

Further developments in public welfare in the United States will be vitally affected by general political developments. More advances are to be expected under a progressive administration than under a conservative administration. But in the final analysis, whether we progress or retrogress will depend on what values and standards are held by the people of the United States. This was emphasized in the Report on Security, Work, and Relief Policies that was transmitted to Congress by President Roosevelt in March 1943:

> In summary, it may be said that all the basic weaknesses of the existing arrangements for assuring maintenance to the economically insecure—namely, the existence of unmet need, the low level of living afforded recipients of public aid, and the unjustifiable differences in the treatment of different categories or persons—stem from one basic cause. This is the still limited acceptance by the country as a whole of the fact that it is to the national interest to ensure an adequate minimum of economic security to all the people of America, regardless of their place of residence. Until this point of view receives full and free acceptance, it is idle to expect that the country will be willing to make the necessary expenditures to secure this objective, to grant to the Federal Government the responsibility for taking the required action when States and localities are unwilling to do so, or to do the hard thinking required to grapple with the social, economic, and administrative difficulties which must be overcome if the many worth-while programs now in existence are to be integrated into a coherent and closely meshed whole.

In transmitting this report in the dark days of World War II, the late President stated:

> We fight today for security for our Nation and at the same time we can endeavor to give our citizens and their families security against attacks from without, and against fear of economic distress in old age, in poverty, sickness, involuntary unemployment, and accidental injuries. We need to look forward to the accomplishment of these objectives—world peace, democratic society and a dynamic economy.
>
> . . . We must not return to the inequities, insecurity, and fears of the past, but ought to move forward towards the promise of the future.

Although the directions of possible advances are stated above in general terms, the welfare needs of the *rural* population would be served by advances in any or all of these directions. The interlocking of agriculture and industry in our economy is paralleled by an interlocking of the welfare of the rural and urban populations. While any national program may require adaptations in order to be applied in rural areas, the prospects for advancement in meeting rural welfare needs are best under conditions of general advancement.

It should be recognized, however, that at the present time rural welfare needs are not being met as adequately as urban welfare needs. Needy rural people receive lower average public assistance grants than the needy urban people receive. And in comparison with urban people, a smaller proportion of rural-nonfarm people, and a much smaller proportion of rural-farm people, are covered by social insurance and by wage-and-hour legislation. Therefore, improvements in the adequacy and extension of the coverage of existing programs imply effecting comparatively greater advances in meeting rural welfare needs, since there is a lag to be eliminated as well as progress to be achieved.

Associated with the rural-urban or farm-nonfarm differentials that exist in meeting welfare needs are factors that, although deeply rooted in our society, are nevertheless not unchangeable. Perhaps the most basic factor is the generally lower level and standard of living in rural areas in comparison with urban areas — a level and standard especially affected by the less favorable economic position of the South, which contains half of the farm population of the country but only a fourth of the nonfarm population. Another factor has been the influence at local, state, and national levels of the political and social conservatism of politically influential farm groups with respect to the concepts, ideals, and practices of public welfare. Rural public welfare may be expected to lag behind urban public welfare because of a less adequate tax resource base unless there is even further equalization through federal financing, or unless there are developments that diminish income differentials existing between the rural and urban population, and between the South and the rest of the nation. But the adequacy of meeting rural welfare needs will lag behind urban standards as long also as the political power of farmers is not effectively wielded for advancement in the directions that have been indicated as pointing toward progress.

CHAPTER 11

RURAL RECREATION AND ART

BY EDGAR A. SCHULER
AND CARL C. TAYLOR

The Role of Recreation in Rural Life

THE value and importance of play in people's lives is one of the major discoveries of this generation. We have found that the desire to play is not confined to children, that its value is not limited to childhood, and that natural and constructive play must be provided for any individual or community in order to insure a rich or even normal life. Because of our greater understanding of individual emotions and social structures, play is no longer considered merely amusement, nor is recreation thought to consist only of either amusement or play.

For an individual, action that is restrained or disciplined by ends other than the development of his personality must be described as work. That which is sufficiently dynamic to constitute freedom of action and development may be termed play, and such freedom is absolutely essential to the development of personality. As for recreation, it is play plus an end or goal to be attained. If it is a game the goal is consciously set; if it is not, the goal is still present in the form of the tonic to life, the joy of experience, and the development of personalities. Recreation includes the joy of amusement and the constructive development of play, but it goes further in that it consciously re-creates what has been torn down or creates or builds something new in life. Its first essential is relaxation, or freedom from such things as work, worry, or monotony, which tear down. Its second essential is that it actually be carried forward by some activity, the momentum of which is supplied by the zest that accompanies amusement and play. And its third essential is that it construct or reconstruct, create or re-create.

The need of rural people for recreation is readily seen when they are asked whether they need release from monotony, whether they need the zest that comes with play, and whether the creative process, which is a product of freedom and zest, should be woven into their lives. For if these factors are worth while in life generally, they are unquestionably the birthright of every boy and girl and every man and woman in the open country.

Probably the chief difficulties in providing adequate recreational opportunities in the open country are the attitudes of farm people toward play and the lack of institutionalized recreational facilities. According to traditional attitudes, much play was a waste of time and was tinctured with immorality. For in the economic struggle of nearly all rural people a philosophy of life was developed in which hard work was thought to be a cardinal virtue and play likely to be a cardinal sin. The church has often frowned on card playing and dancing, and even on sports; and the school for a long time assumed, as some one has said, that its task was "to teach little children, little things, in a little one-roomed school." As for facilities, rural areas have contained no recreation agencies or institutions except those in small towns, and before the coming of the picture show there were practically no such agencies except in large cities.

Today the religious attitude toward leisure-time activities has quite universally changed, but rural churches have become fewer in farm areas and, with few exceptions, are still not equipped with either physical facilities, personnel, or financial budgets with which to promote recreation. The consolidated school, on the other hand, has become a recreation center for thousands of rural communities. It has auditoriums, gymnasiums, and athletic fields, as well as the personnel to supervise and direct leisure-time and social-arts programs. An ever increasing number of farm youth attend these schools, while an increasing number of adults attend extracurricular recreational events sponsored by them. Moreover, farmers' organizations such as the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and the Farmers Union, provide some recreation for farm people; and the Agricultural Extension program for farm boys and girls is thoroughly modern in its attitudes toward recreation and its practices designed to promote it.

The fact is that farm work is no longer as arduous as it was in pioneer and premechanized farming days. And play is no longer regarded as a time-filler or -killer, but is considered a personality- and community-builder. Farm people recognize that they need recreation because they need relaxation or release from the monotony and routine of farm work; that they need the social contacts and the community spirit which are engendered by social and recreational events; and that they need a recreation program for the constructive use of their leisure. Agencies and institutions are now sufficiently numerous to make recreation available to every rural community in America once the value of play is recognized and appreciated. Furthermore, progressive rural recreation programs make use of the materials at hand and do not hesitate to co-operate, whenever possible, with the village or town in order to supply a more adequate program. Play has as much a part in the child's development as education has, and it is as legitimate an activity as work. Its twofold purpose – the development of individual personality and community life – is a worthy one for all life, and therefore, for rural life.

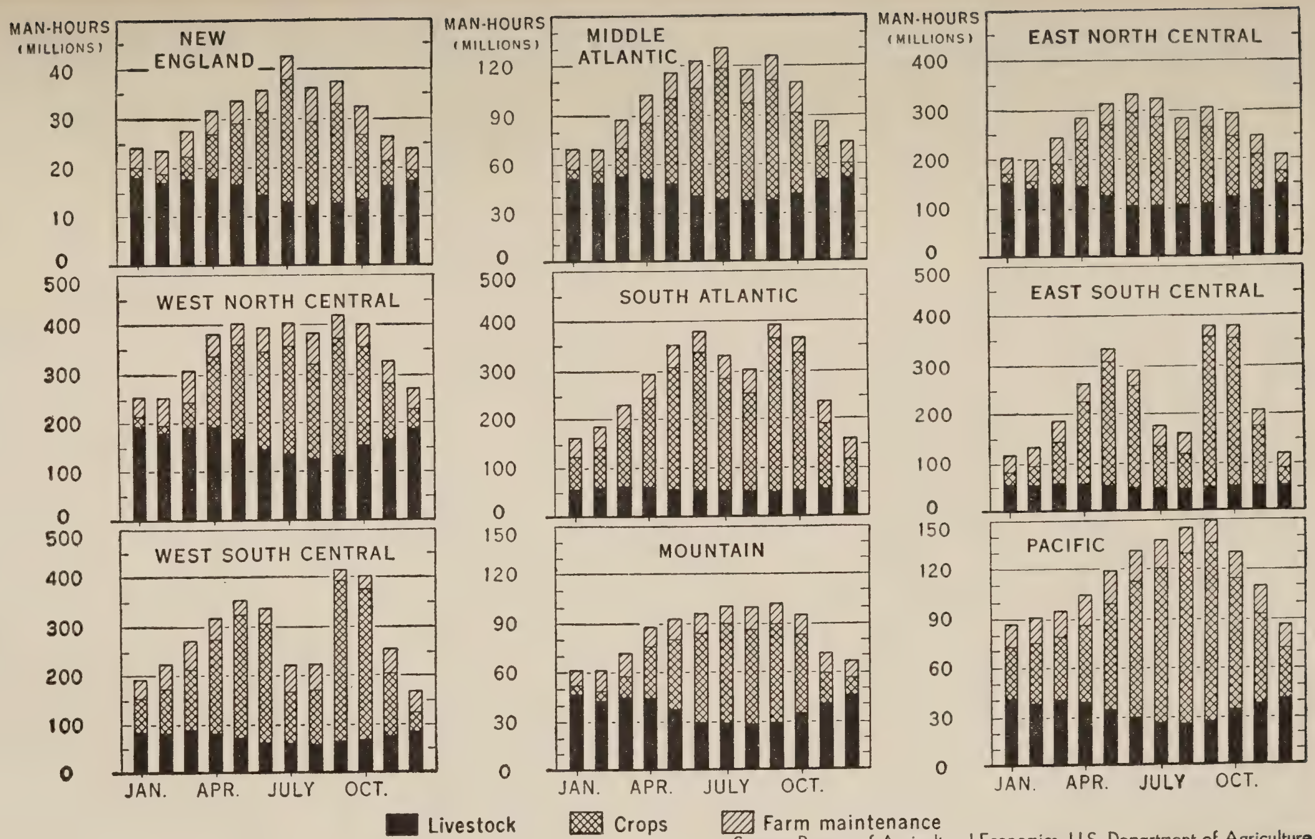
Work and Leisure-time Activities

The modern concern about leisure time as an opportunity for personal growth and development, for recreation, for the development of enriched group relations and activities, is a by-product, though unintended, of technological efficiency, and could not have resulted under more primitive, less efficient conditions of production. But in spite of the development of purebred plants and animals, and of hybrids which are superior even to pure strains, and in spite of mechanization and electrification and all the other skillful and ingenious practices that science has contributed to agriculture, the basic cycle of the seasons still largely governs the distribution of leisure time for the farmer and his family, and, to only a lesser extent, for the villager as well. Demands may differ for various types of crops, and for those who specialize in converting plant products into meat, milk, butter, and eggs. Yet the basic pattern is the same for the Kansas wheat rancher, the Iowa corn-and-hog raiser, the Texas cotton grower, the Maine potato planter, the Florida citrus-fruit grower, the Oregon apple producer, or the specialty-crop farmer wherever he may be. Each type of production requires arduous labor at some seasons and offers some leisure at other seasons. And plowing, planting, cultivating, and harvesting form the fundamental pattern in which the agriculturist operates. The cattle man and the sheep man likewise have their periods of intense activity and of relaxation. The dairyman, to the extent that he buys the feed for his cows, and the dry land farmer, to the extent that irrigation can wipe out seasonality, constitute the chief exceptions to the rule. Even in these cases, however, only a few do not have slack periods and busy periods. It is these times of release from the pressure of work that are the major concern of this chapter.

Subordinated to the annual cycle, but still very significant in any discussion of rural recreation and leisure time, are the weekly rhythms that are imposed by the culture in practically all rural communities. Thus, Sunday is almost universally a day of rest from the workaday jobs that can safely be postponed. To only a slightly lesser extent Saturday afternoon and possibly some midweek evening provide another break in the schedule of work. But these man-made cycles, important as they are, represent merely minor variations in the fundamental cycle provided by the turning of the seasons.

The relation of leisure to recreation is simply that without some freedom from the task of making a living, there is no time for recreation. In short, leisure time is recreational opportunity. It is also opportunity to sleep, to loaf, or to gossip or otherwise "kill time." Leisure time carries with it no mandate that it must be exploited for creative purposes, for apathy, or for vicious pursuits. "The Devil finds tasks for idle hands" is a folk expression of the philosophy that all time is precious and that slothfulness is a sin; but the maxim loses currency as work comes to be regarded as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. In any consideration of recreational and leisure time patterns, therefore, the amount and distribution of time that can be given to such purposes are of basic importance. Data providing precisely this type of information are not available, but it is possible to approach an understanding indirectly.

For instance, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has recently released information, on both a national and a regional basis, on the average length of the workday of farm operators. In 1944 the national averages were:



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 17 MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF ESTIMATED MAN-HOURS OF LABOR REQUIRED FOR LIVESTOCK, CROPS, AND FARM MAINTENANCE

(BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS, 1944)

March, 11.2 hours; June, 12.8 hours; September, 12.1 hours; and December, 10.8 hours.[1]

Numerous other studies give fragmentary data on the use of recreational time by, or the recreational interests of, rural children. For example, a study made in West Virginia almost twenty years ago by Ella Gardner and Caroline E. Legg showed that reading was by far the most frequently mentioned recreational interests of the girls, while for boys it was farm work, including such activities as caring for stock, raising chickens, and working in the garden or fields. The second choice for girls was sewing; for boys it was baseball. Third and fourth, respectively, for both boys and girls were games other than baseball, and free-play activities in woods and fields and with toys and animals. On the average, the children had 2.6 hours daily in which to do as they pleased, but open-country children had less of such time than village and town children had.

Then there is a recent Bureau of Agricultural Economics study of rural radio listening which shows that news broadcasts are today by far the most popular type of program among rural listeners, both farm and nonfarm, male and female. Second choice for both farm and nonfarm women was hymns and religious music; farm men gave second place to farm market reports; nonfarm men, to oldtime fiddlers, singers, and string bands.

As for the frequency of informal social contacts, that is, visiting and being visited, entertaining at meals and being entertained, information on sample corn-belt and cotton-belt farmers was provided in a United States Department of Agriculture study published in 1938. The frequency was greatest among Southern whites, least among Northern whites, and in-between among Negro families. On the other hand, 73 per cent of the Northern whites reported picnicking during the schedule year, in contrast to 37 per cent of the Southern whites and 24 per cent of the Negro families. A similar study made in 1945 obtained data on organized social participation among farm people. As may be seen in Table 27, religious activities were important, while other types of organized community activities were infrequent.

In addition, descriptive field studies yield information on the relative importance of different types of recreation in different rural areas. *Visiting* is almost universal, but it varies greatly between areas, for it is most prevalent and relatively most important in areas of physical or social isolation, that is, in the mountain areas where farm families are relatively isolated from the outside world but live relatively near each other, in the ranch areas where urban institutions and agencies are weak, and among minority groups who constitute cultural islands within majority populations. *Going to town* probably varies most widely as a form of recreation. It is very prevalent in the dairy, corn, and wheat belts and in the ranching areas, but it is not prevalent in the self-sufficing farming areas or among cultural-island minority groups. *Hunting and fishing* are still major sports among farm people in a great many areas. *Dancing,* both formal and informal, is much more prevalent than it was a generation ago, when it was frowned on by many church people. *Church and school entertainments, picnics, steak fries, barbecues, local rodeos,* and *farm auction sales* are each a customary form of recreation in one culture area or another. The *radio,* almost universal in some areas, is a rarity in others. The same is true of the *telephone.* The *movie* comes nearest to being truly universal, but the attendance of farm people varies greatly in different areas. Many farm families in the dairy and corn belts regularly attend the movies twice each week. But attendance is less frequent in the wheat and range-livestock belts, still less frequent in the cotton belt, and scarcely exists at all in the self-sufficing areas.

---

[1] The importance of seasonal variations in the amount of time required for farm work during that year is clearly shown by the figures in the chart (Fig 17). These data provide a picture in reverse of the pattern of leisure time that is available, together with its variations in time and space. They show the annual pattern of time required for farm work in the nine major geographical regions into which the census divided the country. It should be remembered, however, that these figures reflect the wartime pressures whereby longer workdays and work weeks were required than would be normal for farmers in peacetime.

TABLE 27

Percentages of Heads and Housewives in 2,530 Farm Operators' Households Reporting Any Participation during Past 12 Months in Specified Types of Organized Local Community Activities

Type of Activity	Heads Per Cent	Housewives Per Cent
Total	100	100
Religious	68.8	68.1
School, other than educational	23.7	24.2
General farm	16.0	8.2
Lodge or club	12.2	13.3
Educational	11.6	7.9
Other farm organizations	5.3	2.0
Other nonfarm organizations	4.9	2.5
All other organized local community activities	26.5	25.0

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Quarterly Survey of Agriculture, October 1945.

Expenditures for Major Types of Rural Recreation and Leisure-Time Activities

Much of what constitutes recreation is subjective, that is, recreation is not the same for all persons, and it does not necessarily cost money. Nor is it always possible to segregate recreational from other expenditures in survey schedules. The purchase and operating costs of an automobile, for example, do not differentiate the proportions that should be allocated to social visits, marketing or purchasing trips, visits to circuses or state fairs, or hurried runs to hospitals. And the subscription rate to a popular magazine remains the same whether it is read only for the useful facts it contains, for the fiction, or not at all. In fact, such problems occur repeatedly in examining the data on expenditures of selected samples of farm, village, and small city dwellers for a variety of "more or less" recreational and leisure-time purposes.

Information on the numbers and proportions of rural and urban families reporting expenditures for certain items, and on the average amounts of those expenditures, was gathered in the large Consumer-Purchases Study made in 1935–6. This study was not designed to yield data that would be typical of the country as a whole. Rather, the analysis units were drawn to provide information on variations in family consumption by region, size of community, income, and so on. We have selected for presentation here only the data on one income class, the $1,000–$1,249 group, which more or less represents the average for the three sample units covered. Thus, Table 28 presents the data for only one income class in each of three types of analysis units: farms in Illinois and Iowa, villages in the Middle Atlantic and North Central states, and small cities in the North Central states.

During the period covered by the study the greatest proportion of these farm, village, and small-city families in the selected analysis units spent more money for reading matter than for anything else considered either entirely or partly recreational in nature. In fact, more than 97 per cent reported such expenditures, of which the most frequent were for daily newspapers. And although farm families spent less on daily newspapers than did village and small-city families, there was little difference in the proportions reporting such expenditures. Next in relative frequency were payments for magazines, with farm families leading, village families next, and small-city families lowest. About one third of both the farm and the small-city families reported expenditures for weekly newspapers, but over half of the village families reported them. The purchase or rental of books was far less frequent, ranging from 2 per cent for farm families to 5 per cent for village dwellers. Expenditures for books, however, do not of course reveal the amount of reading of books from free public or private circulating libraries. Hence the expenditure figures may tell very little about either the relative importance of books as compared with other types of reading matter, or the relative importance of books in the three place-of-residence analysis units.

Nearly as many of the farm families reported ownership of an automobile as reported expenditures for any reading matter, but only two thirds as many of the village and small-city families had cars. The amounts expended on automobiles include those for both purchase and operation, but they are limited to expenditures for family use of the automobile, with strictly business uses being excluded. The greater relative importance of the automobile for the farm family than for the village or small city family is clearly shown also by the fact that the average expenditures for this purpose were greater among farm families than among village or small-city families.

Neither reading nor use of an automobile, however, is classified as "recreation" in the Consumer Purchases Study. The data so classified are presented here in three groups (which hardly constitute categories in any logical sense): first, "any recreation"; second, "admissions"; and third, "miscellaneous items." Slightly more than nine out of ten families in each of the

TABLE 28

Numbers and Percentages of Families in the $1,000–$1,249 Income Class Having Recreational Expenditures of Specified Types, and Average Amounts Reported: Illinois-Iowa Farms, Middle Atlantic and North Central Villages, and North Central Small Cities, Consumer Purchases Study 1935–6

Type of Recreation Expenditure (*)	Farms			Villages			Small Cities		
	Illinois-Iowa			M.A. & N.C.			North Central		
	No.	%	$	No.	%	$	No.	%	$
Total number of families	252	100		575	100		467	100	
A. Any reading matter *	244	97	7.31	566	98	11.96	453	97	11.25
1. Daily newspaper	221	88	4.83	524	91	7.79	433	93	7.35
2. Magazines	155	62	1.56	280	48	1.83	213	46	1.77
3. Weekly newspaper									
B. Automobiles †	235	93	106.00	366	64	73.00	289	62	70.00
C. Any recreation ‡	228	90	26.96	538	94	22.40	423	91	25.98
1. Radios (ownership)	181	72		522	91		432	93	
2. Pianos (ownership)	101	40		200	35		120	26	
3. Phonographs (ownership)	58	23		122	21		86	18	
4. Games and sports	56	22	1.07	277	48	2.72	177	38	1.98
D. Any expenditures for admissions §	193	77	7.02	462	80	9.10	387	83	12.66
1. Motion pictures	146	58	4.32	408	71	6.95	371	79	10.79
2. Circuses, fairs, others	118	47	2.13	179	31	1.16	140	30	1.16
3. Plays, lectures, concerts	29	12	.23	101	18	.35	49	10	.20
4. Spectator sports	27	11	.34	125	22	.64	81	17	.51
E. Any expenditures for miscellaneous items of recreation ‖	193	77	18.87	429	75	10.58	324	69	11.34
1. Radio	124	49	13.00	185	32	4.06	152	33	4.85
2. Children's toys	80	32	1.82	198	34	2.07	167	36	2.16
3. Pets	50	20	.43	58	10	.36	51	11	.42
4. Club dues	35	14	1.07	176	31	1.72	81	17	1.29
5. Cameras, photo supplies	29	12	.26	110	19	.42	73	16	.43
6. Entertaining	21	8	.52	93	16	1.06	68	15	1.20
7. Sheet music, records	17	7	.12	34	6	.11	21	4	.13
8. Musical instruments	9	4	1.22	29	5	.70	11	2	.64
9. Other	11	4	.43	10	2	.08	13	3	.22
F. Any expenditures for tobacco, smoker supplies *	185	73	15.15	452	79	22.82	373	80	22.01
G. Any expenditures for telephone ¶	143	57	7.46	184	32	6.06	174	37	8.54
H. Food away from home: **									
Food between meals	73	29	2.45	91	16	.90	72	15	1.32
Drink between meals	45	18	1.67	77	13	1.93	58	12	1.99
On travels, vacations	9	4	.59	49	9	3.56	29	6	3.70
I. Any expenditures for laundry sent out ¶	5	2	.67	44	8	2.78	65	14	4.01

* U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 456, Table 22.

† U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 415, Tables 39 and 40 (expenditures).

‡ U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 456, Table 24.

§ U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 456, Table 25.

‖ U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 456, Table 26.

¶ U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 457, Table 41 (farm); Table 49, Miscellaneous Publication No. 432 (villages and small cities).

** U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 405, Table 43 (farm); Miscellaneous Publication No. 452, Table 25 (villages and small cities).

three analysis units reported expenditures for "any recreation." The amounts, roughly, were $27 for farm families, $22 for village families, and $26 for small-city families. Thus, the total expenditures for the category of "any recreation" are not widely different, but significant differences do appear among the three groups of families in the distribution of expenditures within the category.

The importance of the radio to these families, even ten years ago (1935–6), is shown by the fact that 72, 91, and 93 per cent of farm, village, and small-city families, respectively, reported radio ownership. But more significant are the proportions of all recreation expenditures that went for radio purchase, operation, or repair, which were nearly one half for the farm families and one fifth for the village and small-city families. In other words, among farm families the radio took about two and a half times more of all recreational expenditures than it took among the village and small-city families. Obviously the function of the radio is not exclusively recreation, and in general it is probably less exclusively so for farm families than for urban or nonfarm families. Hence the Consumer Purchases Study classification of the radio as a "recreational" expenditure may be just as arbitrary as its classification of reading and of the automobile as nonrecreational expenditures.

Pianos and phonographs, owned by minorities in all three of the analysis units, were found most often in the homes of farm families, less often in the homes of villagers, and least often in the home of small-city dwellers. While nearly 20 per cent of the homes in each group reported possession of a phonograph, possession of pianos was reported by 40 per cent of the farms, 35 per cent of the families in villages, and 26 per cent of the small-city homes. This differential may raise a question as to whether, at the income level here considered, the possession of a piano operates primarily as a musical instrument or as an indicator of status. In either event, why should it be found more essential by farm families than by small-city families? The data do not permit probing of the question, however.

Expenditures for games and sports include a wide variety of activities. Details are not available for all the analysis units covered by the Consumer Purchases Study, but one published table does give the information for small cities in the North Central states, for villages in the Middle Atlantic and North Central states, and for farms in Pennsylvania and Ohio. The entire list of the games and sports that were treated separately includes: hunting, fishing, skating, sledding and skiing, cards and chess, bicycling, golf and billiards, bowling, baseball and tennis, camping, trapping, riding, and other miscellaneous activities. Of this list, the largest proportions of the farm families in the stipulated income group reported expenditures for hunting, while it was hunting and fishing among the largest proportions of village and small-city families. Moreover, the amounts expended show the importance of hunting among the farm families, for 76 per cent of their expenditures for games and sports go for this purpose; whereas among village families hunting gets 41 per cent, and among small-city families, only 28 per cent. Among the latter, bicycling gets more than hunting, or 29 per cent, while among village families it gets only 17 per cent, and among farm families, only 9 per cent.

The next category consists of expenditures for admissions of various types, of which, in all three groups of families, motion-picture admissions were most numerous. Among farm families, however, motion pictures were less important than among families in villages or small cities. While six out of ten farm families reported expenditures for motion pictures, it was seven out of ten in the villages, and eight out of ten in the small-city families. Furthermore, these expenditures took only 62 per cent of farm families' admission fees, but they constituted 76 per cent of admission fees for village families, and 85 per cent of those for small-city families. The second item under "admissions" includes circuses, fairs, dances, amusement parks, and other paid admissions not classified elsewhere. Then there are plays, lectures, and concerts, which involve relatively few families in any of the three groups considered, and relatively little money. Spectator sports include "admissions to ball games, boxing matches, tennis tournaments, and other sports of a similar nature."

The remainder of the data in Table 28 must be dismissed with only brief comment. The role of radio has already been appraised and its importance for the family indicated. It is noteworthy, however, that cash expenditures for tobacco and smoking supplies were greater than those for radio, even among farm families, and much greater for nonfarm families. The inclusion of expenditures for telephone with recreational costs may be questioned, but reference to previous comments about the use of the telephone should settle any doubts.

Rural-urban differentials in the importance of noncommercial types of leisure time and recreational activity still remain, and they will probably persist as long as agriculture is a distinctive way of life. But reading newspapers, magazines, and books usually calls for expenditures; listening to the radio calls for an investment and the payment of operating costs; and even the simple pleasures, like visiting the neighbors or having them in for a friendly evening, are likely to call for the purchase of gasoline or something in the way of "store-bought" refreshments. And as the farm becomes more and more enmeshed in the money economy, the recreational side of life also is made over in the dollar's image. Historical developments, economic relationships, psychosocial patterns of interaction between rural and urban people, traditional values and their gradual transformation, the conflict between the prestige of the novel and adherence to the tested and venerable past — all of these problems and others are involved. But even though the basic causes may not be fully known, it seems clear at least that rural people tend to take over their recreational patterns, along with much else, from urban people.

Recreational Services for Rural People

It was noted early in this chapter that the recreational agencies and services in rural areas are inadequate. In recent years, however, there has been a definite tendency to correct this weakness. Not only are farm people traveling to town and to urban centers to enjoy recreational events, but at the same time recreational services are being developed in rural areas. The Agricultural Extension Service, consolidated schools, Boy and Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., and even churches are promoting recreation; and the National Recreation Association has in recent years taken special interest in work with rural people.

It would be impossible to discuss all the recreational activities and programs of local farm groups, or even of local and state governments. It is possible only to mention those promoted by federal agencies. The Agricultural Extension Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the United States Forest Service, and the National Park Service, all have large recreational programs. In fact, in 1945 the Extension helped 26,000 rural communities to improve their recreation facilities, aided 35,000 communities in planning recreation programs, and gave 68,496 man-days in helping to train more than 100,000 voluntary recreation leaders. The Fish and Wildlife Service works continuously to conserve wild life as a basis for promoting the most ancient of rural sports, hunting and fishing. And in 1946 more than sixteen million hunting-and-fishing licenses were purchased in the United States.

As for the National Forests, they covered about 180,000 acres, distributed in seventy-five areas throughout the country, and approximately twenty million people visit them annually. More than three thousand camp and picnic areas are provided in the National Forests, while more than fifty thousand acres are dedicated to winter sports. In these forests motoring and hiking are among the most popular recreational activities, and routes with the greatest scenic possibilities have been built by the United States Forest Service. The recreational work of the National Park Service is fairly well known, but few persons know that the National Forests have more visitors each year than the National Parks have. This is not true, however, if battlefields, cemeteries, monuments, and other historical sites under the management of the Park Service are included, for there are twenty-seven National Parks, which are visited by approximately ten million persons annually, about the same number that visit the historical sites. The Parks are located in the most scenic areas of the country, many of them conserving and capitalizing on the scenic gifts of nature that were millions of years in forming. Furthermore, the Park Service has built camps, hotels, trails, and natural zoological gardens, and provides not only guides, but also camp recreational leaders for the pleasure and comfort of tourists. Although none of these federal government services, except those of the Agricultural Extension, are exclusively for rural people, they are available to, and are being increasingly used by, farm people, who have always hunted and fished, and many of whom now take summer vacations in the National Parks and Forests.

The National Recreation Association works with state park, forest, conservation, education departments, and agricultural extension services. At times it has had as many as five persons in the field co-operating with the Federal Extension Service in conducting rural recreation institutes. Indeed, it has established almost a thousand recreational training centers and has conducted approximately two thousand institutes throughout the country. The purpose is "to make available training in recreation leadership to volunteers and professionals who work with rural groups, such as Extension Clubs, Older Rural Youth, Farmers Union, Granges, Farm Bureaus, Parent-Teachers Associations, Church Organizations, Future Farmers, Schools, and Community Clubs." It has enlisted almost one hundred thousand volunteer leaders to assist in these projects and has operated in all of the forty-eight states, and these institutes and training centers have promoted music, drama, arts and crafts, and social recreation. In addition, this organization has furnished thousands of mimeographed recreational guides to rural organizations. It also publishes a monthly magazine and recently issued a substantial guide booklet entitled *Rural Recreation.* Practically all rural leaders and rural agencies recognize the value of these aids.

The subheads of the guide booklet indicate the various types of recreation in which farm people now engage. The following are only a few of the more than two hundred listed:

Family Camping
Musical Games
Hobbies
Children's Parties
Softball
Old Time Games
Play Days
Picnic Programs
Water Games
Mixers
Charades
Mystery Games
Stunts
Folk Dancing
Pageants
Bands
Nature Craft
Old Home Week
Exhibits
Treasure and Scavenger Hunts
Vacations
Team Games
Contests

In fact, every type of recreation listed in this guide book is practiced in rural areas, and now that practically all rural leaders and agencies recognize the need and value of leisure time activities, there is little doubt that the development of rural recreation will be fairly rapid in the future. It will probably be some time, however, before recreational activities will be as well institutionalized in rural as in urban areas, and before organized play places will be furnished in rural areas to the extent that they are today provided in almost all cities. But this need not be a handicap if such places are available in rural towns, and if they are made available to farm as well as town people. To be sure, recreation buildings, playgrounds, and equipment are expensive to maintain and require organization and paid leadership for operation. Moreover, some of them should be located in open-country areas, where streams, hills, caves, and other natural topographic features dictate apt locations. There are many instances in which farm people have sponsored the development of such enterprises, and in a number of places this has happened in sections where there are few outstanding scenic spots. Still, grove-parks, picnic grounds, and even organized camps have been developed and have been made available to town as well as country people.

It has often been said, and truthfully, that there was a real loss when rural America lost most of its folk games and self-created recreation. But it is doubtful if even "old timers" would want to go back to having only Fourth of July and Decoration Day celebrations, to horse racing, all-day picnics, old-time county fairs, or even to husking bees, sugaring-offs, and church sociables. There is little doubt that with all the hard work and relative isolation of the old days, farm people had good times at all of these as well as other types of recreation; and some of them, such as folk games and folk singing, are being revived. But we may expect that the redevelopment of recreation for farm people will for the most part come in terms of the modern day in which they live, a day of the automobile, or larger group participation, and of commercialized recreation. In any event the problem for farm people is not greatly different from that for city people, for both must learn how to develop opportunities for the creative use of leisure time, and how to introduce into busy lives the zests and enthusiasms that are a part of both play and art.

The Relationship between Art and Recreation

The social arts of music, pageantry, drama, and some forms of dancing are recognized everywhere as forms of rural recreation. From the enjoyment that the lone cowboy gets from his song to the appreciation of grand opera and symphony, music affords pleasure and self-expression. Pageantry has always been a part of rural life, appearing in such events as harvest festivals, celebrations of frontier days, and fairs. Folk dancing is in fact almost entirely a rural product, and plays, skits, and other dramatic performances have in the past been a part of home-talent entertainments in rural communities. Unfortunately, however, these folk arts have all suffered through competition with commercialized recreation and under the subtle psychology of urbanization. Artists have recently begun to recapture and re-create them. Although in doing so they have lifted the folk arts to a higher plane, they have often converted them into exhibitions in which farm people participate only as spectators.

Gutzon Borglum, the distinguished sculptor, said: "It is the role of the artist to reach down into the lives of people and civilization and lift their souls up where they can see them." He himself did this for part of our civilization when he created his great piece of sculpture in the Black Hills of South Dakota. And it has been done by other American artists in both poems and paintings. Certainly John Steuart Curry, Adolf Dehn, and others have done it many times — in no instance perhaps more perfectly than Dehn when, painting farm scenes that most farm people see every day of their lives, he portrayed farmsteads framed by groves and fields and the symmetry of trees, haystacks, windmills, and farm buildings.

Grant Wood believed that an artist could not know, much less depict, the souls of people in whose lives he did not share as a personal experience. Anyone who has known the people of whom he was a part cannot doubt the authenticity of his *American Gothic.* He probably gave a valid interpretation of the decadence of rural folk arts when he said: "The farmer is not articulate. . . . The farmers I know seem to me to have something of that old Anglo-Saxon reserve which made our ancient forbears look upon talk about oneself as a childish weakness. . . . Ridicule by city folks with European ideas of the farmer as a peasant, or, as our American slang has it, a 'hick', has caused a further withdrawal — a proud and disdainful answer to misunderstanding criticism." There is nothing disdainful, however, in Paul Engle's poem "For an Apple Grower," which pictures a calm and solid character in act and thought, and which might apply equally well to many other types of farmers. In fact, calmness and strength of character are characteristics which are often associated with farmers in poetry and rural literature.

Folk music and group singing are more prevalent today in isolated than in so-called modern farm communities. In fact, the "singing school," once a part of the life of practically every rural community, has practically passed out of existence. But its place is being taken here and there under the guidance and promotion of universities like those of Wisconsin and Kentucky. The University of Wisconsin assists local communities throughout the state in arranging and performing choral singing, while at the University of Kentucky the school of music trains teachers who go into communities all over the state to teach music in the schools and attempt to promote it in out-of-school activities. A state-wide music event, to which are brought the outstanding choruses of the year, is held at the University of Wisconsin during Farm and Home Week. The choruses who come to that state event are but a few of the many that exist in the rural areas. Moreover, a number of other state agricultural colleges and universities are promoting choral and community singing as a regular part of their extension programs. Still, such programs must be multiplied many times before American farm people match farm people in some other societies as lovers of and participators in music.

In the field of drama, outstanding work is being done by the State College of Agriculture of North Dakota. A. G. Arvold, founder of the Little Country Theatre Movement in that state, described his work as follows: [2]

> My story is simple. It is a narrative on a work in the promotion and establishment of community centers in country districts. The scene is laid out on a Dakotah prairie where seven out of every eight people are classed as rural. . . .
>
> After careful study of hundreds and literally thousands of requests received during the last nine years from every section of the state of North Dakota as well as America for suitable material for presentation on public programs and at public functions, with a personal acquaintance with hundreds of young men and women, whose homes are in small communities and country districts, the idea of The Little Country Theatre was conceived. The idea conceived became an actual reality, when an old dingy chapel on the second floor of the administration building at the North Dakota Agricultural

---

[2] Arvold, Alfred G.: *The Soul and the Soil.* New York: pamphlet issued by the National Recreation Association; 1916.

> College located at Fargo, North Dakota, was remodeled into what is known as The Little Country Theatre. . . .
>
> The object of The Little Country Theatre is to produce such plays and community programs as can be easily staged in a country church basement, a country school, in the sitting room of a farm home, in the village or town hall, or any place where people assemble for social betterment. Its principal function is to stimulate an interest for good clean drama and original entertainment among the people living in the open country and villages, in order to help them find themselves that they may become better satisfied with the community in which they live. . . .
>
> To help people find themselves and their true expression in a community is the great idea back of The Little Country Theatre. It will serve as a sociological experiment station. Every day its vision grows bigger. In years to come, if the idea is thoroughly carried out, there will be more contented farm communities in the state of North Dakota because the people will have found their true expression in the community. As a dynamic force in spreading the gospel of social recreation among people who reside in this and other states, its worth can never be computed. The social life which will eventually be built up around the community will be one characteristic of the inhabitants of that community. The soil must have a soul.

This Little Country Theatre Movement in North Dakota has stimulated a great range of folk-theater activities among the rural people of the state. Some of the highlights of the state-wide activities in recent years of the Little Country Theatre include: drawing an audience of ten thousand at Casselton to see *The Kingdom of the Flowers* pageant; drawing an audience of eleven thousand at Stutsman to see the historic pageant *Yesteryears in Stutsman* in which a thousand people took part; presenting *The Story of Grand Forks County* in the natural outdoor theater at Latimore before an audience of twelve thousand; drawing over three thousand people to watch the patriotic pageant *In Old McLean* in the Lewis and Clark Bowl; and over four thousand people to *The Cattle Kings Paradise* when it was presented near Grassy Butte in the heart of the Badlands; and, at the Mouse River Park near Mohall, giving twenty-five hundred country people the opportunity to watch eight 4-H Club girls present the *Ballet of the Chanticleers.*

A look at the Little Country Theatre's schedule from June 18 to July 8, 1946, when it made a state-wide pilgrimage, will give an idea of the scope and quality of its work. On the 18th a neighborhood program was arranged by the Traill County Homemakers at Mayville; six hundred were present. On the 19th a program was given in the Hall of the Mountain King at Fort Ransom, an outdoor "hall" that had been dedicated as a rural theater a few years before when sixteen hundred people had witnessed the production of *Peer Gynt.* This time the program consisted of a recital highlighting Edvard Grieg, Henrik Ibsen, and Ole Bull, followed by the presentation of *Distant Drums,* a covered-wagon play in three acts. And in spite of heavy rain three hundred people watched the play. On the 21st *Covered Wagon Days in the Goose River Valley* was enacted in the courtyard at Hillsboro. In this pageant three hundred people from all over the county participated, and five thousand people were present to watch. On the 26th four thousand people attended a program in the open-air theater at Hawk's Nest, near Carrington, where a pageant entitled *The Legend of the Hawk's Nest* was put on. Many local people participated, and four thousand people were present to see the program, which constituted the dedication of a natural hill park that had been donated by an old settler of the area. On the 30th of June in the Lewis and Clark Bowl, twelve miles north of Washburn, over twelve thousand people witnessed *In the Valley of the Missouri,* a pageant in three episodes. In this giant outdoor spectacle were featured nine covered wagons, one hundred riders mounted on saddle horses, a county-wide band of one hundred pieces, and fourteen airplanes in a sky show. On July 2, 3, and 4 the Little Country Theatre troupe co-operated in the Kildeer Mountain Roundup and Rodeo. During these three days two folk plays were presented in an outdoor natural theater to audiences of over a thousand, and a pageant, *The Heart of the Kildeers,* was staged at sunset by the Kildeer Mountain Saddle Club and the Dunn County Homemakers Clubs, with the Little Country Theatre players co-operating. On the 7th of July at Madora a mile-long pageant entitled *In Old Madora* was staged, with local bands, covered wagons, tallyhos, sulkies, buckboards, fifty juvenile roughriders, and over one hundred adult riders. The pageant commemorated the dedication by Theodore Roosevelt of the Red Trail Bridge over the Little Missouri. And on the night before the pageant, in which the Little Theatre troupe participated, the original play *Green Grow the Lilacs* was presented in the town hall to an audience of about a thousand. In commenting on the experience of the 1946 state pilgrimage of the Little Theatre, Arvold said: "The pilgrimage was an unusual success. Country folk like real theatre."

The resourcefulness exhibited by Arvold and the Little Country Theatre Movement can be well illustrated by three projects. The first is that of the Farmers' Club in Bergen township, which used the loft of a local farmer's barn to present the play *Back to the Farm,* to an audience of seven hundred people. Said Arvold: "The acoustics were perfect – the ventilation excellent. Horse stalls were used for dressing rooms and make up. Folks drove 50 miles to see the play. It was a unique experiment. Everybody liked it." The second is that of the creation of the El Zagal Park out of a natural depression along the Red River which the city of Fargo was seriously considering using for a dumping ground. "Alfred Arvold's vision," as recorded in The Little Country Theatre, "saw a large outdoor theatre in the place. He persuaded a fraternal order . . . to purchase the same. He laid it out and fathered it with the aid of the membership. The fifty acres are beautifully landscaped. The bowl or out door theatre contains twenty six acres. It will accommodate over a hundred thousand people. It is a civic asset the fraternal order El Zagal Temple can take a pride in for years to come." This park was dedicated by a historical pageant, *The Covered Wagon Days in the Land of the Dakotas.* It was in three episodes and featured fifteen hundred characters in costumes, one hundred horses, fifty Indians, a caravan of covered wagons, stage coaches and cowboys, seven bands, Arab patrols, chanters, and a bugle-and-drum corps. The people who participated in the pageant came from all over the state, and over thirty thousand people saw it. The third project is that of the *Eighty Miles of Lilacs.* Arvold tells the story: [3]

> In the Red River Valley of the Dakotas, May Days are Lilac Days. It is planting time for all who live along the roadside. A colorful chain of varied lavenders and purples will some day connect two enterprising cities, Fargo and Grand Forks. Each link in the chain will represent a clump of fragrant bushes. Eighty miles of lilacs will greet the eye as one travels north and south. Every year country and city folks will crown their Lilac Queen with pomp and parade and pageantry. The legend of the orient will be a yearly event. The children young and old will sing—
>
> *Lilac Days, Lilac Days, we welcome you*
> *Lilac Days, Lilac Days, mean Spring anew.*
>
> In song and story Lilac Days will mean much to the people of the prairies. The lilac will beautify the highway. It will add color to our lives. It will make the countryside attractive to everybody. Eighty miles of lilacs is a project of The Little Country Theatre.

The Carolina Playmakers is another group that has done much to promote both drama and pageantry in rural areas. It began in 1918 on an improvised stage at the University of North Carolina under the leadership of Frederick Koch. Since then the University Group of players and playwrights have appeared on city stages all over the East and South. But the most valuable work among rural people is done by the young men and women who filter back into rural communities and become both leaven and leaders for those who live there. Koch describes the Carolina folk plays as follows: [4]

> Our Carolina Folk-Plays are plays of common experience and common interest, ranging in scene from the Great Smoky mountains on the western border to the shifting shoals of Cape Hatteras. Some of the titles will suggest the variety of the materials from which the plays are drawn: *A Shotgun Splicin',* a comedy of mountain wedlock; *Old Wash Lucas,* a farm tragedy of the stingiest man in Harnett County; *Off Nags Head,* the haunting tragedy of the lost daughter of Aaron Burr; *Lighted Candles,* a tragedy of the Carolina highlands; *In Dixon's Kitchen,* the interrupted courtship of a suntanned country boy; *Dod Gast Ye Both,* the robustious comedy of a mountain moonshiner; *Blackbeard,* pirate of the Carolina Coast; *The Scuffletown Outlaws,* of the Croatan Indians of southeastern Carolina; *Gaius and Gaius, Jr.,* a comedy of the old plantation days; *Job's Kinfolks,* from the lives of three generations of mill people in Winston-Salem; *Trista,* a wistful fantasy of fisher folk of the little town of Beaufort.

Although pageants and festivals, generally harvest festivals, are being revived and promoted in some communities and areas, too often they are promoted as advertising. Sometimes there are artists guiding and developing them. Cornell and other universities have promoted them for years, while co-operative marketing groups and general farmers' organizations have done so spasmodically. However, pageants, being better suited to a staging of greater magnitude than is available to a single rural community, can seldom be a local community enterprise. They are good when not too commercialized, but they do not take the place of the simple rural folk arts that have quite generally degenerated in America.

---

[3] Arvold, A. G.: The Little Country Theatre. Fargo, North Dakota: published by A. G. Arvold; 1945.

[4] Koch, Frederick H.: "Toward a New Folk Theatre." *Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota,* Grand Forks (1930).

Important as they are, space does not permit detailed description of the numerous agencies and groups that are attempting to promote the social arts in rural areas. It is sufficient to note that farm people and some of the agencies that serve them recognize that the development of art on the part of farm people themselves is by no means a hopeless undertaking.

Art in Rural Life and Rural Life in Art

The role of art is to lift the realities of life out of the commonplace into which they drift so easily, and to give them superiority over the mistakes, ugliness, and unrealities of our existence. Human life is so dynamic, and its relationships are so complex and diversified, that society's greatest task is to establish and maintain order, symmetry, and harmony in them. As for rural art, it should begin with the conservation and preservation of the beauties of nature which are more prevalent and more obvious in rural than in urban areas. As Grant Wood said, "Rural life is not a hinterland of New York." And he "lost patience with the thinness of things viewed from outside, or from a height." He viewed Midwest rural life from the inside and near at hand, and quoted the following poem by Jay Sigmund, a fellow townsman, to illustrate his point of view: [5]

I know he held the tang of stack and mow—
  One sensed that he was brother to the soil;
  His palms were stained with signs of stable toil
And calloused by the handles of the plow.

Yet I felt bound to him by many ties:
  I knew the countryside where he was born;
  I'd seen its hillsides green with rows of corn,
And now I saw its meadows in his eyes.

For he had kept deep-rooted in the clay,
  While I had chosen market-place and street;
  I knew the city's bricks would bruise his feet
And send him soon to go his plodding way

But he had sought me out to grip my hand
  And sit for one short hour by my chair
  Our talk was of the things that happen where
The souls of men have kinship with the land.

[5] Wood, Grant: *Revolt Against the City*. Iowa City, Iowa: Clio Press; 1935.

I asked him of the orchard and the grove,
About the bayou with its reedy shore,
About the grey one in the village store
Who used to doze beside a ruddy stove.

He told me how the creek had changed its bed,
And how his acres spread across the hill;
The hour wore on and he was talking still,
And I was hungry for the things he said.

Then I who long had pitied peasant folk
And broken faith with field and pasture ground
Felt dull and leaden-footed in my round,
And strangely like a cart-beast with a yoke!

Landscapes, which are subjects for paintings by the best artists of the world, are too often only commonplace to farm people. The snow scenes of winter, the sight of flocks of birds in flight, or their symphony of song, which is to be heard only in the early morning, are largely denied to urban dwellers but are commonplace to farm people. Wild flowers are also ordinary in the country. But it should not be assumed that farm people do not enjoy all these things, and where necessary they seek to preserve them. Vachel Lindsay, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, Carl Sandburg, Sidney Lanier, Edwin Ford Piper, Robert Frost, and many other American poets have described the emotions of farm people as they experienced things that others may never dream are a part of rural living. The following verses from "Kansas" [6] by Lindsay is but one example:

I loved to watch the windmills spin
And watch that big moon rise.
I dreamed and dreamed with lids half-shut,
The moonlight in my eyes.
For all men dream in Kansas
By noonday and by night,
By sunrise yellow, red and wild,
And moonrise wild and white.
The wind would drive the glittering clouds,
The cottonwoods would croon,
And past the sheaves and through the leaves
Came whispers from the moon.

Another example is the verse from "Country Church" [7] by Robert P. Tristram Coffin:

He could not separate the thought
Of God from daisies white and hot
In blinding thousands by a road
Or dandelion disks that glowed
Like little suns upon the ground.
Holiness was like the sound

---

[6] From Vachel Lindsay: *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty*. Copyright, 1914 by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission "Kansas."

[7] From Robert P. Tristram Coffin: *Strange Holiness*. Copyright, 1935 by The Macmillan Company, and used with their permission "Country Church."

Of thousands of tumultuous bees
In full-blossomed apple trees,
Or it was smell of standing grain,
Or robins singing up a rain.

And yet many opportunities to create beauty in rural areas are not grasped. Farm buildings, school and church buildings, public roads, scenic bits of topography along streams and ravines are not improved or are not made objects of art in rural America as often as they are in many other countries. If artists would work with country people toward the objective of raising all these things above the commonplace, rather than picking out the quaint and purely rustic as their subjects for art, they would better serve the people. Getting art into rural life and rural life into art is a reciprocal process. And rural life will not be idealized until rural people themselves love it enough to raise many of the commonplace things of the countryside to the level of artistic appreciation; and until artists lift the commonplace, rather than the quaint, queer, and the rustic, to the level of art.

The man with the hoe, women gleaners with hand sickles, and toothless hillbillies are no longer either commonplace in, or representative of, modern American rural life. On the other hand, things of beauty created by farm people constitute the handicrafts of all nations. And they are, so to speak, indigenous in many farming areas of the United States. Moreover, good poems and paintings are also sometimes produced by farm people.

Art is both creative and re-creative. Its essence and contribution is that it idealizes life and living, and introduces constructive leisure into lives largely dominated by work and worry. Certainly rural life is not yet ideal, for it has not fully learned how to develop and use leisure. Such development can be achieved, first, by eliminating the handicaps that are all too prevalent in farm life: long and unstandardized working hours; the lack of places and facilities for play and recreation; the widespread conviction that play and amusement are wicked; the lack of power machinery, particularly in the home; and the absence of libraries and museums, of home and community games, and even, sometimes, of home reading matter. Second, it is necessary to develop the time and the facilities for leisure, as well as an appreciation of it. And play, recreation, sport, amusement, rest, and the creation and appreciation of art and beauty are all part of constructive leisure.

Cities consider recreation and the constructive use of leisure of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure of public funds, both tax and endowment, for recreation and art. Country districts must eventually do likewise, for leisure activities sometimes outrank one's vocation in supplying a zest and purpose to life. This is not abnormal, but Mark Twain's philosophy was even better. He said: "I have not done a day's work in my life; what I have done, I have done because it has been play." Finally, the use of leisure is a part of the activity and art of living. In order to learn to live fully, one must learn to work and to convert both work and its dividends into a satisfying, worth-while life. In achieving this end, the art of a satisfying and creative use of leisure is essential.

PART III

RURAL PEOPLE

CHAPTER 12

RURAL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

BY *MARGARET JARMAN HAGOOD*

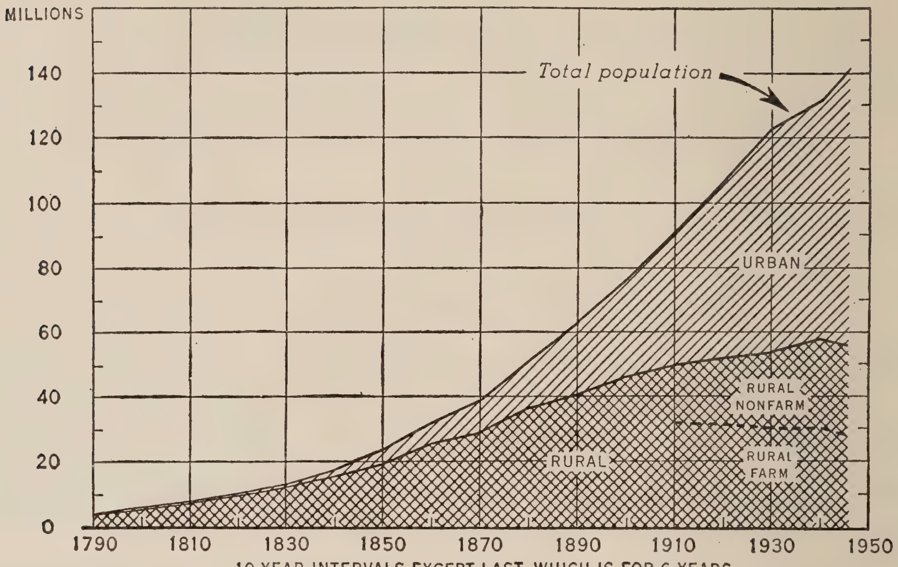
Why Consider Population Characteristics?

THE age, sex, and marital status of a person sets limits to the sorts of activities in which he engages and to the contribution he makes to the society in which he lives. The very young and the very old of both sexes, as well as a majority of married women, do not usually contribute directly to the economic activities of a population, although they may contribute greatly to society by affording other types of satisfaction to their friends and families.

It is important, therefore, to consider certain population characteristics in order to understand the functioning of a population. These characteristics include age, sex, and race, as well as marital, educational, and employment status, in addition to other similar factors. All of these are customarily measured in the United States by a cross-section survey of the entire population taken every ten years by the Bureau of the Census and by sample surveys taken more frequently. They are sometimes termed "static" population characteristics, because they can be ascertained through a snapshot type of inventory of a country's population. Another type of population characteristic includes the rates of change in various sectors of the population which result from births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and migration. Except for the last item, information on these "vital" events in the life of an individual is secured in the United States through registrations required by law. The number of births, deaths, marriages, or divorces that occur in a population group during a specified period of time, when related to the number of people in that group, yield rates that describe "dynamic" characteristics.

The rural population of the United States is officially defined as all the people living outside of urban places, and urban places are defined as incorporated places including 2,500 or more persons within the incorporated limits. (A few other densely populated places are classified as urban by special rule.) Ever since statistics have been available in the United States, the population characteristics of the rural population have shown important differences from those of the urban population, and within rural areas, the population characteristics of the people living on farms differ from those of nonfarm rural people. These rural-urban and farm-nonfarm differences in static and dynamic population characteristics bear both cause and effect relationships to the other factors of rural life discussed in this text.

Writers on population matters often refer to "people" and "persons," but actually the population approach to the study of social phenomena is highly "depersonalized," being mainly statistical, with each person counted or classified according to some criterion that can be objectively applied to every individual in the population. The end results sought are summarizing measures for a population group — such as the farm population of the corn belt — which will afford a quantitative description of that group; and this description is usually used in comparison with a similar type of description of another group. A measure for one population group may often be not very revealing or understandable if presented alone, but when compared with a corresponding measure for another group or even for the same group at a different time, it may point up differences sharply. For example, the fact that 32 per cent of the rural-farm population in 1940 was under fifteen years of age is not particularly illuminating. But the comparison of this percentage with the corresponding 21 per cent for the urban population in the same year, or with 38 per cent for the rural-farm population in 1920, gives a readily understandable measure of the difference that existed in 1940 between



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census with 1910 rural-farm population estimated

Fig. 18 POPULATION GROWTH IN THE UNITED STATES, 1790 TO 1946
(BY URBAN-RURAL AND FARM RESIDENCE SINCE 1910)

the proportion of children in the farm population and the proportion of children in the city population, or an indication of the change that occurred between 1920 and 1940 in the numerical importance of children among people living on farms. That is why, in this section's various tables and charts presenting population statistics, the emphasis is on comparisons between two or more population groups at a given time, or on comparisons of the condition of a given group over periods of time.

Growth of the Population of the United States, Urban and Rural

The history of rural life in the United States is greatly affected by the fact that the population in this country grew rapidly during the century and a half following the first national census, which was taken in 1790. Between 1790 and 1890 the population increased sixteenfold, or from about 4,000,000 to 63,000,000 and by 1947 the number had reached 143,400,000.[1] This rapid increase was due both to the large excess of births over deaths and, until laws passed in the early part of the 1920's restricted foreign immigration, to immigration of persons from foreign countries. A fuller description of the types of people who constituted this population increase has been given in Chapter 2, but the fact of rapid growth is so important in this country's history that some repetition may be justified.

TABLE 29

Population Growth in the United States, Urban and Rural, 1790–1947

Year	Total	Urban*		Rural*		Rural-Nonfarm		Rural-Farm	
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
1790	3,929,214	201,655	5.1	3,727,559	94.9				
1800	5,308,483	322,371	6.1	4,986,112	93.9				
1810	7,239,881	525,459	7.3	6,714,422	92.7				
1820	9,638,453	693,255	7.2	8,945,198	92.8				
1830	12,866,020	1,127,247	8.8	11,738,773	91.2				
1840	17,069,453	1,845,055	10.8	15,224,398	89.2				
1850	23,191,876	3,543,716	15.3	19,648,160	84.7				
1860	31,443,321	6,216,518	19.8	25,226,803	80.2				
1870	38,558,371	9,902,361	25.7	28,656,010	74.3				
1880	50,155,783	14,129,735	28.2	36,026,048	71.8				
1890	62,947,714	22,106,265	35.1	40,841,449	64.9				
1900	75,994,575	30,159,921	39.7	45,834,654	60.3				
1910	91,972,266	41,998,932	45.7	49,973,334	54.3	18,118,341	19.7	31,854,993	34.6
1920	105,710,620	54,157,973	51.2	51,552,647	48.8	20,159,385	19.1	31,393,262	29.7
1930	122,775,046	68,954,823	56.2	53,820,223	43.8	23,662,710	19.3	30,157,513	24.5
1940	131,669,275	74,423,702	56.5	57,245,573	43.5	27,029,385	20.5	30,216,188	23.0
1947†	143,400,000	84,800,000	59.1	58,600,000	40.9	31,200,000	21.8	27,400,000	19.1

* Adjusted to 1940 Census classification of urban and rural.

† Based on published estimates of the Bureau of the Census, with persons in the armed forces allotted to the residence groups in the same proportions as veterans of World War II were distributed in April 1947.

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, "Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series, P–20, No. 9." Rural-farm estimate derived from Census estimate of total farm population for 1910.

There are available statistics that show the division of the country's population into urban and rural for each decade since 1790, but only since 1910 are there figures showing the division of the rural population into farm and nonfarm residents. For more than a century after the Declaration of Independence this was a predominantly rural country. In 1870 nearly three fourths of the total population lived in rural areas, and probably about one half lived on farms. Since then the United States has undergone rapid urbanization and industrialization, so that between 1910 and 1920 the balance of the population shifted from a rural majority to an urban one; and since 1920 the proportion of the country's population that lives in urban areas has continued to increase. As is shown in Table 29, in 1910 the percentage distribution of the population by residence was 46 per cent urban, 20 per cent rural-nonfarm, and 34 per cent rural-farm. By 1947 the proportion living in urban areas had risen to 59 per cent, and the rural-nonfarm proportion had increased to 22 per cent, and the rural-farm proportion had dropped sharply to 19 per cent. Population students believe that the period of rapid population growth in the United States is over, although the latest future-population estimates predict a continued increase in total population up through 1990. The period of rapid increase in urbanization is probably over also, although a slower rate of increase in the percentage of population living in urban areas is expected to continue for a number of decades.

---

[1] See chart (Fig. 18) and Table 29.

The size of the farm population in the United States has generally tended to decrease since 1916, although this trend was interrupted for three years during the great depression of the 1930's. The fact that, through the development and application of agricultural science and through advances in farm technology, a decreasing number of persons working on farms are able to supply the agricultural products needed by a total population that increased by 56 per cent between 1910 and 1947 is the chief factor underlying the decline in the farm population of the United States from 32,000,000 in 1910 to 27,400,000 in 1947. Since further mechanization of agriculture and further increases in production per agricultural worker are expected, it seems likely that the farm population will continue to decline gradually for some decades.

In the case of the rural-nonfarm population, however, neither the past trends nor the future prospects are very clear. In earlier decades, the rural-nonfarm population was more closely linked to agriculture through its function of providing small agricultural trade-and-service centers, and in that period its growth was therefore closely correlated with that of the farm population. But this interrelationship has lessened during the past decade or so, and is likely to lessen still more in the future. It was a suburban trend toward rural-nonfarm areas that between 1930 and 1940 caused this segment of the population to increase at a faster rate than the urban. And the future trend in the size of the rural-nonfarm population will probably be more significantly affected by trends in residence preference on the part of nonagricultural people than it will be affected by trends in agriculture or in the number of people dependent on agriculture.

The Rural Population of the United States in 1940 — Farm and Nonfarm

Some figures, prepared on the basis of sample population surveys, are available on the rural population in the years during and after World War II. But for detailed information on the composition and regional distribution of the rural population of the United States, it is necessary to study the prewar situation of 1940, since that is the last time a complete population census was taken in the United States. In 1940 the 57,000,000 people living in rural areas made up 44 per cent of the total population of the country. In the same year, however, rural residents still formed a majority of the population in the three southern geographic divisions, in the West North Central and Mountain divisions. In the East South Central division, they formed 71 per cent of the population. In the Northeast, East North Central, and Pacific states, rural residents made up only a fourth to a third of the total population, but these states had such large urban populations that the figures for the country as a whole showed a majority of urban residents.

For the country as a whole, the 57,000,000 rural people in 1940 were almost equally divided between those living on farms (52.8 per cent of all rural people) and those not living on farms. But, as may be seen in Table 30, the proportion varied considerably in different parts of the country. In the South, where rural areas are primarily agricultural, the proportion of the rural population living on farms was 62 per cent, while in the industrialized Northeastern states, the proportion of the rural population living on farms was only 27 per cent.[2]

The division of the rural population into those living on farms and those not living on farms serves to group into the rural-farm population the majority of all families living in the open country. The rural-farm population, however, also contains many families living on farms located in the suburban zones of cities and towns, as well as many whose farms, or portions of them, are located in rural villages and hamlets. It also includes most (but not all) of the farm operators and their families, plus a majority of farm laborers and their families. In 1940 farm operators and members of their households constituted 83 per cent of the farm population. Among these operators, however, were many who were part-time farmers, since their major time was spent in nonagricultural work, and the group also included semiretired farmers and sharecroppers. Because the majority of all rural-farm residents are dependent upon agriculture for a livelihood, the rural-farm (or total farm)[3] population is often used as the population base to which agricultural income is related. But in the last fifteen years increasing numbers of farm residents, although continuing to live on farms, have taken nonfarm jobs, and this trend has served to lessen the identification of the farm population with

---

[2] Maps (Figs. 19 and 20) illustrate the relatively heavy concentrations of rural-farm population in the South and of rural-nonfarm population in the Northeast.

[3] The "total" farm population includes the rural-farm population, which makes up about 99 per cent of it, and a small number of persons who live on farms located in urban areas.

TABLE 30

Population by Rural-Urban Residence, United States and Major Geographic Divisions, 1940

Area	Total Population		Urban		Rural					
					Total		Rural-Nonfarm		Rural-Farm	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
UNITED STATES	131,669,275	100.0	74,423,702	56.5	57,245,573	43.5	27,029,385	20.5	30,216,188	23.0
Northeast	35,976,777	100.0	27,568,085	76.6	8,408,692	23.4	6,123,431	17.0	2,285,261	6.4
New England	8,437,290	100.0	6,420,542	76.1	2,016,748	23.9	1,484,686	17.6	532,062	6.3
Middle Atlantic	27,539,487	100.0	21,147,543	76.8	6,391,944	23.2	4,638,745	16.8	1,753,199	6.4
North Central	40,143,332	100.0	23,437,483	58.4	16,705,849	41.6	7,447,160	18.6	9,258,689	23.0
East North Central	26,626,342	100.0	17,444,359	65.5	9,181,983	34.5	4,598,539	17.3	4,583,444	17.2
West North Central	13,516,990	100.0	5,993,124	44.3	7,523,866	55.7	2,848,621	21.1	4,675,245	34.6
South	41,665,901	100.0	15,290,483	36.7	26,375,418	63.3	10,031,504	24.1	16,343,914	39.2
South Atlantic	17,823,151	100.0	6,921,726	38.8	10,901,425	61.2	4,863,219	27.3	6,038,206	33.9
East South Central	10,778,225	100.0	3,165,356	29.4	7,612,869	70.6	2,344,478	21.7	5,268,391	48.9
West South Central	13,064,525	100.0	5,203,401	39.8	7,861,124	60.2	2,823,807	21.6	5,037,317	38.6
West	13,883,265	100.0	8,127,651	58.5	5,755,614	41.5	3,427,290	24.7	2,328,324	16.8
Mountain	4,150,003	100.0	1,771,742	42.7	2,378,261	57.3	1,277,059	30.8	1,101,202	26.5
Pacific	9,733,262	100.0	6,355,909	65.3	3,377,353	34.7	2,150,231	22.1	1,227,122	12.6

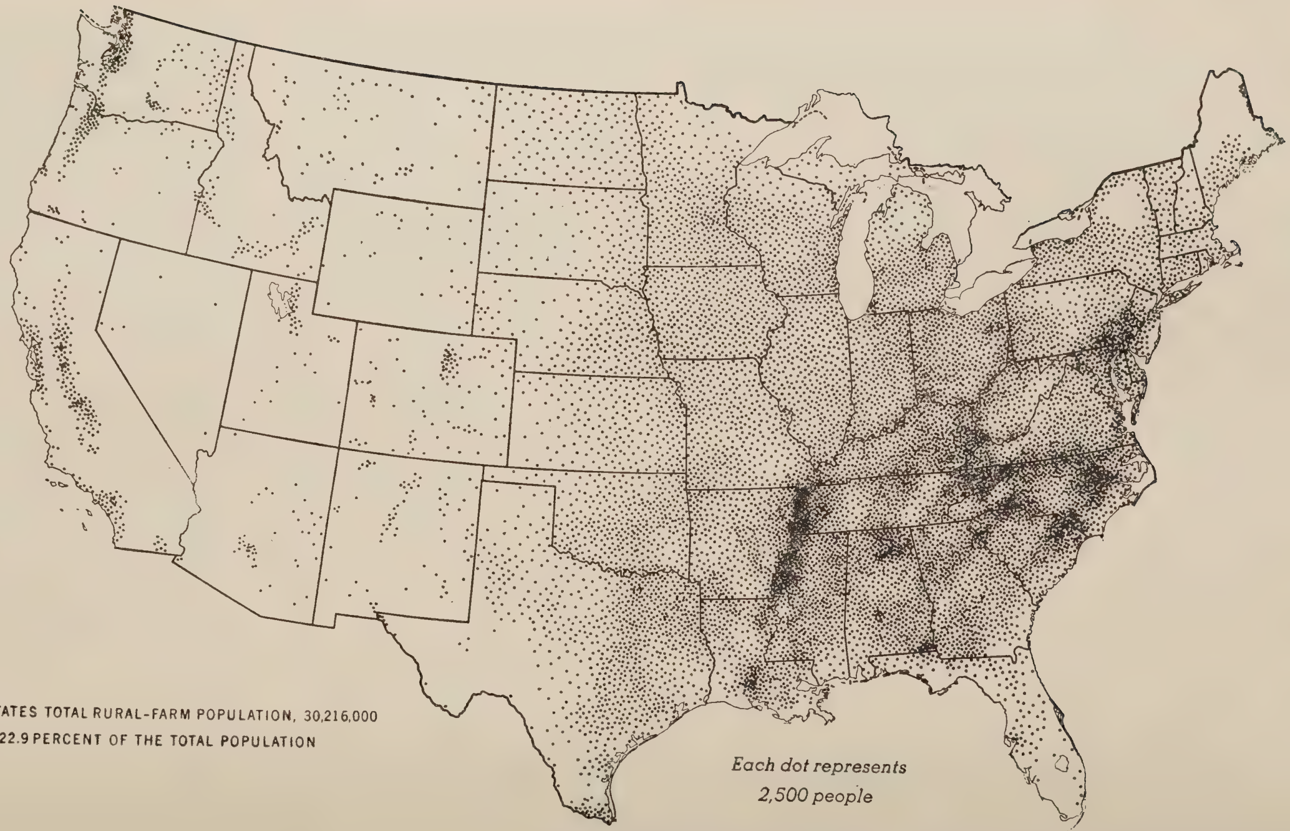
Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population.

agriculture. Experimental studies now under way in the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics are aimed at identifying the group of persons within the farm population who are directly connected with agriculture.

Characterization of the rural-nonfarm population is difficult because it is composed of such differing elements. At one extreme there are the families of farm laborers and even of farm operators who, although not living on farms, are closely connected with agriculture and resemble the farm population. At the other extreme there are the many nonfarm families who live in metropolitan districts (including cities of 50,000 or more population), who have little or nothing in common with the farm population, and who are engaged in industrial occupations. In between these two extremes there are various intermediate situations. One way of arranging these in a scale is to use as a criterion the size of the population center in which a rural-nonfarm family lives. Another way is to use as a measure the degree of closeness in the relation between the occupation of the family's major breadwinner and agriculture, or the degree of his dependence on the farm population for trade or patronage. The few figures that are available reveal much variation in the degree of similarity existing between the rural-nonfarm and the farm populations with respect to residence characteristics and economic and occupational interests.

In highly industrialized states the rural-nonfarm population is much more "urban" in character than it is in agricultural states. For example, 61 per cent of all the rural-nonfarm population of New Jersey, which ranks sixteenth among the forty-eight states in the matter of size of rural-nonfarm population, lived in metropolitan districts in 1940 (metropolitan districts being defined as cities of 50,000 and over, together with adjacent cities, villages, and townships that contain 150 or more people per square mile). Such rural-nonfarm people are more similar to urban people than they are to farm people in respect to residence, population, and income characteristics. To point up the difference in the character of this rural-nonfarm population, one need only contrast the New Jersey characteristics with those of seven Western states that have no metropolitan cities and in which none of the rural population lives within a metropolitan district.

Another important "urban" group in the rural-nonfarm population – and it partly overlaps the metropolitan area group – consists of persons who live in centers of 2,500 or more population, centers which are in every way similar to urban centers except that they are not incorporated. In 1940 there were over five hundred such places, a number about one sixth of that of incorporated places of 2,500 or more population, and in the sixty-three that had populations of 10,000 or more, the urban character was especially pronounced. As in the case of the rural-nonfarm population living in metropolitan districts, there was great variation among states in the importance of this group. In California 24 per cent of the rural-nonfarm population in 1940 lived in essentially urban, although unincorporated, centers of 2,500 or more population, while in eight other states – Minnesota, Mississippi, Oklahoma,

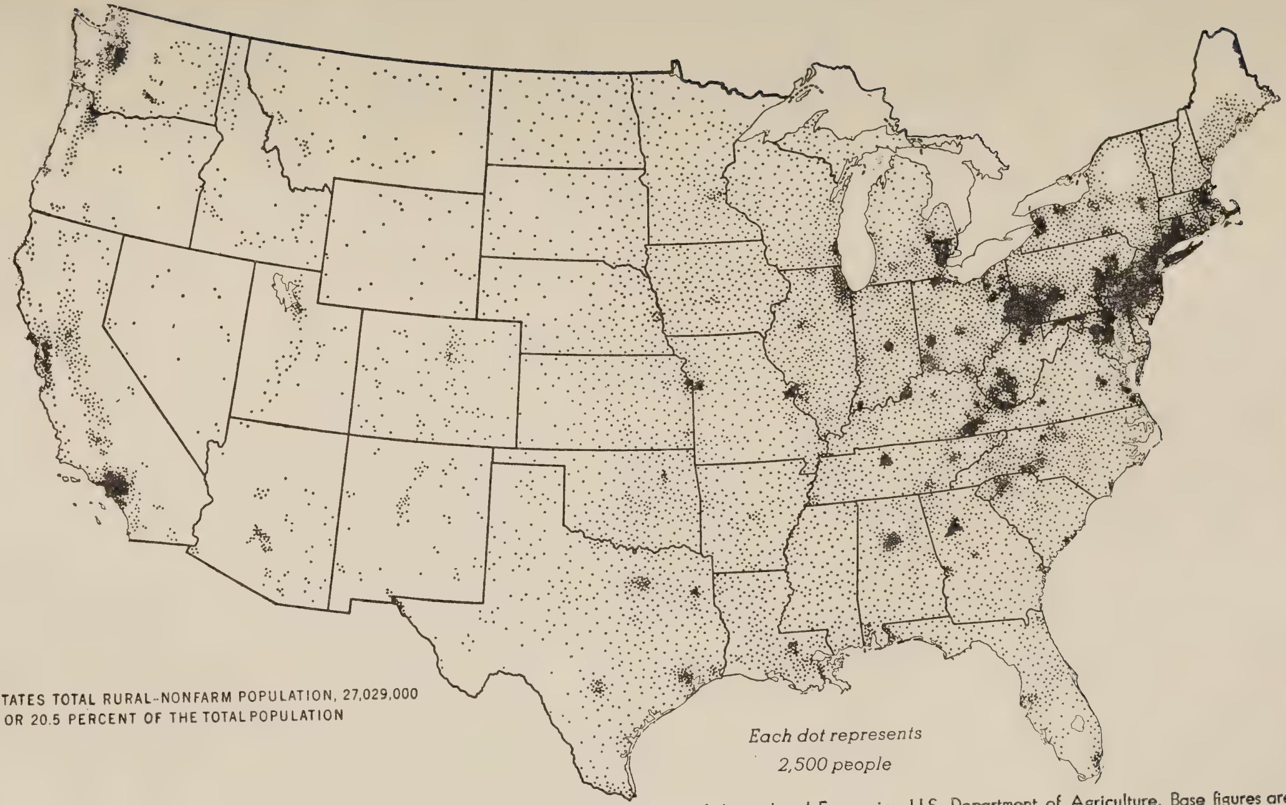


UNITED STATES TOTAL RURAL-FARM POPULATION, 30,216,000
OR 22.9 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION

Each dot represents
2,500 people

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Base figures are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census

Fig. 19 RURAL–FARM POPULATION
(APRIL 1, 1940)



UNITED STATES TOTAL RURAL-NONFARM POPULATION, 27,029,000
OR 20.5 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION

Each dot represents
2,500 people

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Base figures are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census

Fig. 20 RURAL–NONFARM POPULATION
(APRIL 1, 1940)

South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming — none of the rural-nonfarm population lived in such centers.

The dispersion of dwellings and a low population density are the settlement characteristics associated with rural life, in contrast with the concentration of dwellings and high population density associated with urban and metropolitan life. Complete data are not available on the distribution of the rural population according to these indications of the degree to which conditions are "rural," but Table 31 gives related information.

The size of the largest population center in a county provides a clue to how rural the entire county is. In 1940, for example, 40 per cent of all the counties in the United States had no population center, incorporated or unincorporated, with as many as 2,500 inhabitants. While 63 per cent of the population in these counties lived on farms, the census classified all the population as rural. These 1,225 most-rural counties contained only 10 per cent of the entire population of the United States. The next most-rural group of counties was composed of 637 counties that had places of between 2,500 and 5,000 population as their largest centers, and these counties contained another 10 per cent of the total population of the United States. At the other end of the scale were 233 metropolitan counties, which together contained 51 per cent of the total population of the United States.

The rural-farm population is much more heavily concentrated in counties that do not have large population centers than is the rural-nonfarm population. Half of the entire rural-farm population lived in counties that had no population center with as many as 5,000 residents, and only 10 per cent lived in metropolitan counties. In contrast, as great a proportion of the rural-nonfarm population (31 per cent of the total) lived in metropolitan counties as lived in counties with no center larger than one with a population of 5,000. This method of classification thus indicates that slightly less than one third of the rural-nonfarm population was strictly "rural," slightly less than one third was subject to metropolitan influences, and slightly over one third lived in counties of an intermediate nature.

Moreover, the degree to which the rural-nonfarm population was truly rural varied greatly by regions. Over one half of the rural-nonfarm population in the Northeast, and nearly one third of that in the West, lived in metropolitan counties. Corresponding proportions in the North Central region and in the South were, respectively, one fourth and one fifth. Conversely, the South had the highest proportion of its rural-nonfarm population living in counties whose largest centers had populations under 2,500.

In occupational composition, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 14, the rural-nonfarm population is more nearly similar to the urban than it is to the farm population. For the percentage (7) of the employed workers in the rural-nonfarm population engaged in agricultural occupations in 1940 is nearer to the 1 per cent of the urban population so engaged than it is to the 78 per cent of the rural-farm workers engaged in farming.

TABLE 31

Distribution of the Rural and Urban Population and of Counties by Size of Largest Population Center in County, by Regions, 1940

Residence	Total		Metropolitan		25,000–50,000†		10,000–25,000		5,000–10,000		2,500–5,000		Under 2,500	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
UNITED STATES														
Total population	131,669,275	100.0	67,373,865	51.2	8,809,700	6.7	15,283,691	11.6	14,162,866	10.7	12,482,277	9.5	13,556,876	10.3
Urban	74,423,702	100.0	56,052,053	75.3	4,940,050	6.6	6,789,156	9.1	4,217,405	5.7	2,425,038	3.3	—	—
Rural-nonfarm	27,029,385	100.0	8,303,030	30.7	2,192,461	8.1	3,981,796	14.7	4,077,187	15.1	3,470,926	12.9	5,003,985	18.5
Rural-farm	30,216,188	100.0	3,018,782	10.0	1,677,189	5.6	4,512,739	14.9	5,868,274	19.4	6,586,313	21.8	8,552,891	28.3
Number of counties	3,070	100.0	233	7.6	118	3.8	352	11.5	505	16.4	637	20.8	1,225	39.9
NORTHEAST														
Total population	35,976,777	100.0	28,605,451	79.5	1,794,657	5.0	2,970,967	8.3	1,808,022	5.0	576,469	1.6	221,211	.6
Urban	27,568,085	100.0	24,585,762	89.2	1,035,456	3.8	1,342,239	4.9	509,432	1.8	95,196	.3	—	—
Rural-nonfarm	6,123,431	100.0	3,266,765	53.3	517,715	8.5	1,062,599	17.4	859,393	14.0	282,009	4.6	134,950	2.2
Rural-farm	2,285,261	100.0	752,924	32.9	241,486	10.6	566,129	24.8	439,197	19.2	199,264	8.7	86,261	3.8
Number of counties	217	100.0	70	32.3	19	8.7	47	21.7	42	19.3	21	9.7	18	8.3
NORTH CENTRAL														
Total population	40,143,332	100.0	19,550,025	48.7	3,277,815	8.2	4,706,306	11.7	4,721,879	11.8	3,768,233	9.4	4,119,074	10.2
Urban	23,437,483	100.0	16,679,452	71.2	1,998,362	8.5	2,309,004	9.8	1,611,744	6.9	838,921	3.6	—	—
Rural-nonfarm	7,447,160	100.0	1,935,537	26.0	653,870	8.8	1,011,187	13.6	1,162,811	15.6	1,030,783	13.8	1,652,972	22.2
Rural-farm	9,258,689	100.0	935,036	10.1	625,583	6.8	1,386,115	15.0	1,947,324	21.0	1,898,529	20.5	2,466,102	26.6
Number of counties	1,056	100.0	71	6.7	47	4.5	127	12.0	195	18.5	210	19.9	406	38.4
SOUTH														
Total population	41,665,901	100.0	11,776,865	28.3	2,542,968	6.1	5,850,900	14.0	6,305,970	15.1	7,074,184	17.0	8,115,014	19.5
Urban	15,290,483	100.0	8,884,645	58.1	1,300,031	8.5	2,299,860	15.1	1,607,023	10.5	1,198,924	7.8	—	—
Rural-nonfarm	10,031,504	100.0	1,973,264	19.7	640,827	6.4	1,436,382	14.3	1,609,004	16.0	1,772,621	17.7	2,599,506	25.9
Rural-farm	16,343,914	100.0	918,956	5.6	602,110	3.7	2,114,658	12.9	3,089,943	18.9	4,102,639	25.1	5,515,608	33.8
Number of counties	1,387	100.0	68	4.9	37	2.7	132	9.5	210	15.1	325	23.4	615	44.4
WEST														
Total population	13,883,265	100.0	7,441,524	53.6	1,194,260	8.6	1,755,518	12.6	1,326,995	9.6	1,063,391	7.7	1,101,577	7.9
Urban	8,127,651	100.0	5,902,194	72.6	606,201	7.5	838,053	10.3	489,206	6.0	291,997	3.6	—	—
Rural-nonfarm	3,427,290	100.0	1,127,464	32.9	380,049	11.1	471,628	13.8	445,979	13.0	385,513	11.2	616,657	18.0
Rural-farm	2,328,324	100.0	411,866	17.7	208,010	8.9	445,837	19.2	391,810	16.8	385,881	16.6	484,920	20.8
Number of counties	410	100.0	24	5.8	15	3.7	46	11.2	58	14.1	81	19.8	186	45.4

* Counties are classified as metropolitan which have a central city of 50,000 population or more or which are adjacent to such counties if one-half or more of their total population is located within a metropolitan district as designated by the Bureau of the Census in 1940.

† Counties having a central city of 25,000 to 50,000 that are not included in a metropolitan district.

Source: Compiled from 1940 Population Census on basis of classification given in "County Classifications by Size of Largest City, United States, April 1940," by Nettie P. Bradshaw, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, October 1944.

Rural-Urban and Farm-Nonfarm Differences in Population Characteristics, 1940

In most population characteristics there is a sharp contrast between the rural-farm population at one extreme and the urban population at the other extreme, with the rural-nonfarm group taking an intermediate position.

TABLE 32

Rural-Urban Differences in Selected Population Characteristics, 1940

Characteristic	Urban Population	Rural Population		
		All Rural	Rural-Nonfarm	Rural-Farm
Age composition				
Per cent of population under 14 years	19.8	27.7	25.8	29.3
Per cent of population 65 years and over	6.8	6.8	7.3	6.6
Median age (Years)	31.0	26.1	27.7	24.4
Median size of household (Persons)	3.16	3.48	3.21	3.81
Median grade of school completed				
Persons 25 years and over (Grades)	8.7	8.0	8.4	7.7
Persons 20–24 years (Grades)	12.0	9.6	10.7	8.8
Sex composition				
Per cent males of population 20 years and over	48.4	52.3	51.1	53.6
Per cent females of population 20 years and over	51.6	47.7	48.9	46.4
Marital status				
Per cent of married males 20 years and over	69.3	70.2	71.4	69.2
Per cent married females 20 years and over	64.3	74.1	71.8	76.4
Per cent widowed or divorced males 20 years and over	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.2
Per cent widowed or divorced females 20 years and over	16.3	13.1	14.8	11.2
Labor force participation rates				
Per cent of males 14 years and over in the labor force	79.6	78.3	74.9	81.3
Per cent of females 14 years and over in the labor force	31.2	16.4	20.7	12.1
Per cent nonwhite	8.7	12.2	8.3	15.7
Per cent foreign born	12.5	4.0	5.1	3.1

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Volumes II and IV.

Table 32 summarizes for these three residence groups, and for the two rural groups combined, measures of selected and important population characteristics that indicate the ways in which these groups differ.

Age composition: The proportion of the population composed of children is much higher on farms than in cities. In fact, in 1940 there were for a given number of adults about 50 per cent more children on farms than there were in cities, with an intermediate situation in the rural-nonfarm population – a situation somewhat nearer the corresponding proportion for the rural-farm group than it is near that for the urban group. These differences resulted from the higher birth rates in rural areas (discussed in the next chapter), and they would have been even greater if there had been no migration from farms in the preceding fourteen years, because the migrants from farms are mainly young adults in or approaching the age groups that have the highest fertility rates.

Rural-urban differences in the ratio of children to adults have important consequences, and these are discussed in other chapters of this book. But it is worth repeating here that one of the most important of these consequences is that the provision of public educational facilities for children in rural areas puts a relatively larger burden on the taxpayers. This fact, together with the fact that the tax-resource base is relatively lower, accounts in part for the generally poorer standards of the schools in rural areas.

At the other end of the age scale, the position of the rural-nonfarm population is not intermediate between the urban and the rural-farm populations. Persons 65 years of age and over make up the highest percentage of the population in rural-nonfarm areas (7.3 per cent) and the lowest in the rural-farm population, the percentage in the urban population being intermediate between these two. Rural towns and villages contain a larger than proportionate share of retired persons, many of whom formerly lived on farms. Future-population estimates indicate that between 1940 and the year 2000 the percentage of persons 65 years old and over will just about double, so that if the present residence distribution of older people continues, there will be an increase in the problems of providing for the aged in all groups, with a higher concentration of these problems in the rural-nonfarm population. As pointed out in the chapter on rural welfare, the federal government participates in both social-insurance and public assistance programs for the aged, so that, in contrast with the situation regarding public education, the financial burdens arising from the fact that a disproportionate share of the aged reside in rural-nonfarm areas are to some extent alleviated.

The average or median age of a population group is affected more by the proportion of children in the population than it is by the proportion of the aged, since children are numerically more important than persons 65 years of age and over. In 1940 the median age (which divides the population into two groups of equal size, one older and one younger) was 31.0 years in cities, 24.4 years on farms, and 27.7 years in the rural-nonfarm areas. Even though the rural-nonfarm population had a higher percentage of old persons than the urban population had, its larger proportion of children caused the median age to be almost exactly halfway between those of the populations on farms and in cities. Insofar as the relative weight of the dependency burden is indicated by age composition, or, more specifically, by the ratio of children and aged to persons of working age (14 to 64 years), this is the same order in which the three population groups would rank, although the rural-nonfarm ratio would be somewhat nearer to the rural-farm than to the urban ratio.

Size of family: The higher birth rates on farms result in families whose average size is larger than that of rural-nonfarm or urban families. In 1940 the average number of children borne by farm wives who had completed the childbearing period of life was 4.2, while the figure for urban women was only 2.7. At any given date, however, the average number of family members living together in the same household is much smaller than these figures would indicate, since in the case of young couples, the families will not have been completed, and in the case of older couples, all or most of the children may have left the parents' home. In 1940 the median size of households living on farms was 3.81 persons, while for rural-nonfarm households it was 3.21 persons and for urban households, 3.16 persons. The differentials are most striking when the age of the head of the household is taken into account. For farm households in which the male head was 35–44 years of age and in which the wife was present, the median size was 4.31 persons, or 33 per cent larger than the median size of city households whose male heads were in the same age group.[4]

Educational status: Persons living on farms have had, on the average, somewhat less education than persons living in cities, although the difference for the entire adult population is not so great as might be supposed. The median grade of school completed by the adult farm population, i.e., those 25 years of age and over, was only one grade below that for urban residents (7.7 grades as compared with 8.7 grades). These levels reflect the educational attainment of past decades more than they reflect the educational situation of the present, for more recent differentials are greater, as is indicated by the educational attainment of young adults. In 1940 the median grade of school completed by persons between 20 and 24 years of age on farms was 8.8, while in cities it was 12.0. These figures suggest that the farm-city gap in the amount of education provided may be widening. They are not conclusive, however, because the figure for urban persons 25 years of age and over is affected by the presence in urban areas at the time of the census of many persons in this age group who were brought up on farms or were foreign-born immigrants who had had their schooling in other countries.

Sex composition: Women predominate in cities, and men predominate on farms. Men also predominate, but by a smaller majority, in rural-nonfarm areas. As far as data are available, there is no basis for believing that this situation is due to any difference between the sex ratio of babies born on farms and that of babies born in cities. The truth is that the difference is produced wholly by the fact that a greater proportion of females than of males migrate from farms. And it is for this reason that the differentials show up more clearly among the adult population only than among the total population including children. In the population 20 years of age and over, men made up 53.6 per cent on farms, 51.1 per cent in rural-nonfarm areas, and only 48.4 per cent in urban areas. Agriculture does not offer women as much in the way of vocational opportunity as it offers men, and farm-reared girls who do not marry at an early age often migrate to villages, towns, or cities in order to find gainful employment.

---

[4] In both cases the age group selected represented the time when the average size of the family is greatest, when most of the children have been born and yet few of them have left the parents' home.

Marital status: Partly because of the higher proportion of men in the farm population, the girls who remain on farms have a better chance of getting married than do those who go to cities. Of all the females 20 years of age and over who were living on farms in 1940, 76.4 per cent were married, while 71.8 per cent of those in rural-nonfarm areas and only 64.3 per cent of those in cities were married. Moreover, among farm women there were relatively fewer who were single, widowed, and divorced than there were among rural-nonfarm or urban women. There are several explanations for these differences. If a farmer's wife loses her husband through death, she is often unable to continue the operation of the farm with only her children to help, and she therefore moves into a village or city. And while divorce is less frequent among farm than among city people, if it does occur, the farm woman is likely to move to some nonfarm area where there is a greater variety of jobs open to women than there is on farms.

Among men, the differences between the several residence groups in the proportion married do not follow the same pattern as that existing among women, and the differences are greatest for men between 20 and 29 years of age. In 1940 the farm population had the lowest percentage of married men in this age group (42.9 per cent), while the urban population had only a little higher percentage (43.1), and the rural-nonfarm population had the highest (50.9 per cent). What these differences reflect is that young farm men tend to marry at a somewhat higher average age than the men in the rest of the population. This is undoubtedly due in part to the expectation and wish by farm parents that a son, *after he reaches maturity,* will help his father in the operation of the farm for a while, whereas the great majority of families in the nonfarm population do not operate family enterprises. The lower proportion of married young men, and the slightly higher average age at marriage of men on farms, may also be due in part to the fact that the farm population has a relatively smaller number of single females of corresponding ages. In 1940 the ratio among the farm population of single men who were between 20 and 30 years of age to single women in the same age group was slightly more than 2 to 1, while in urban centers it was slightly more than 1 to 1. The result is that young women on farms marry at an earlier age. In 1940, 14.6 per cent of farm girls between 15 and 19 years of age were married, while only 8.8 per cent of urban girls in the same age group were married. These farm-city differences reflect to a certain degree the lower average age at which marriage occurs in the South, since the South contains a much larger proportion of the farm population than it does of the urban.

Labor-force participation rates: Populations also differ with respect to the proportion of persons who are old enough to work who are engaged in gainful pursuits. Among men, farms have the highest proportion (in the last week of March 1940, 81.3 per cent of all males 14 years of age and over on farms were either employed or seeking work). The proportion was only slightly lower in cities (79.6 per cent), but it was considerably lower (74.9

per cent) in the rural-nonfarm population. This higher rate of labor-force participation among farm men and boys is due mainly to the fact that relatively more of the school-age group and of the older men were working, for in many cases it is possible to retire from active work on a farm more gradually than from industrial jobs. On the other hand, the lower rate of labor-force participation among rural-nonfarm men is due partly to the greater proportion of older men in that population. And among men 65 years of age and over in all residence groups, the proportion gainfully occupied has been declining in recent decades – a trend that was accelerated by the passage in 1935 of the Social Security Act, which provided for Federal and state support for old-age assistance to the needy aged and for old-age and survivors' insurance for workers of retirement age in most types of nonagricultural employment.

The comparisons to be drawn from the 1940 census are less satisfactory for females than for males, because of a tendency on the part of enumerators not to classify as employed in agriculture many farm wives who actually did farm work. The 1940 census showed that 12.1 per cent of rural-farm women, 20.7 per cent of rural-nonfarm women, and 31.2 per cent of urban women were in the labor force. But these figures are believed to understate the gainful employment of women in agriculture, particularly the rural-farm rate, both because of misclassification and because many women who work in the fields in the summer and fall months were not doing farm work in that last week of March to which the census data refer.

Race and nativity composition: The farm population has nearly twice as great a proportion of nonwhites as the urban or rural-nonfarm populations have. This is due almost wholly to the presence of Negroes on farms in the South, where the proportion of Negroes in the farm population in 1940 was 28 per cent, as compared with only 0.6 per cent of Negroes in the farm population outside of the South. When they were emancipated from slavery most of the Negroes in this country were on Southern farms, and the great majority stayed on farms after they were freed. Gradually at first, and then more rapidly in the World War I period and the decade following, Southern Negroes migrated from farms to cities within the South and outside of the region. In 1920, 48 per cent of all Negroes in the United States lived on farms in the South, but by 1940 the figure had fallen to 34 per cent.

In contrast with its greater than proportionate share of nonwhites, the rural-farm population contains a much smaller than proportionate share of foreign-born persons. In 1940 only 3.1 per cent of the rural-farm population were foreign-born, while 5.1 per cent of the rural-nonfarm and 12.5 per cent of the urban populations were foreign-born. Since the farm population has tended for a number of decades to be the source rather than the destination of migrants, its current composition is more heavily weighted than the urban with descendants of the earlier, in contrast to the later, European immigrants to this country. This fact may account in part for the conservatism of farm people and for the lag in their acceptance of the progressively advancing standards of an economic democracy.

CHAPTER 13

DYNAMICS OF RURAL POPULATION

BY MARGARET JARMAN HAGOOD

Differential Rates of Natural Increase

Changes occur in a population through the births and deaths that take place among its members and through migration into and out of the population. Nearly every country in the world has a birth rate that is higher than its death rate, and the change in population resulting from this imbalance between births and deaths is called "natural increase."

Birth rates are highest in the rural-farm population, intermediate in the rural-nonfarm population, and lowest in the urban population. Thus these population groups have different rates of natural increase, mainly because of differences in birth rates, since the death rates are more nearly equal. In any fairly large population the numbers of births and deaths that occur annually per thousand population tend to be maintained at nearly the same levels from year to year. This is not to say that there have not been long-time trends in both birth and death rates in the several residence groups of the population in the United States, nor that business cycles and wars have not caused increases and decreases in birth rates. But the remarkable fact is the statistical regularity that populations manifest in their birth rates. This regularity demonstrates the power and continuity of the culture in keeping fairly even flows of births and deaths.

In the United States data on these vital events are obtained through local registration of births by the doctor or midwife who delivers the child, and of deaths by the doctor who certifies the death. In each case the registration, which since 1933 has been required by law in all states, is necessary for the issuance of birth and death certificates. Information on birth and death certificates includes the usual place of residence of the mother or of the decedent, so that it has been possible to tabulate vital statistics separately for the rural and urban populations of states and counties. The rural and urban rates derived from these data are not believed to be very accurate, however, for the tendency has been to report a town or city as the residence for people who actually live in near-by rural areas, especially if the town or city is the post-office address of the person involved. Moreover, the percentage of failure to register births and deaths is higher in rural than in urban areas, partly because physicians are scarcer.

The limitations to the accuracy of vital statistics when they are related to rural and urban residence complicate acquisition of the facts concerning differences between rural and urban people with respect to fertility and mortality. In 1940 the crude birth rate[1] for the rural population was reported as 19.1 live births per thousand population – a rate 2 points higher than the corresponding one for the urban population. Some of the births reported as occurring to urban residents, however, should have been classified as occurring to rural residents. If a correction could be made for this factor, it would raise the rural and lower the urban rate, and thus widen the differential between the two groups. In the same year the crude death rate for the rural population was 9.8 per thousand population, which is to be compared with 11.5 for the urban population. In this case a similar adjustment or correction would tend to decrease the rural-urban differential.

The crude rate of natural increase refers to the number by which the births exceed the deaths per thousand population in a given year. In 1940 the reported rate of natural increase was 9.3 in the rural and 5.6 in the urban population. Thus the balance of births and deaths in the rural population was such that it would have caused that population to increase, without migration, at a rate two thirds greater than that by which the urban population would have increased. However, both groups were increasing, through the excess of births over deaths, by between one half and one per cent a year. The errors in reporting residence in births and death registrations do not affect the rural and urban rates of natural increase as seriously as they affect the separate birth and death rates, since the mistakes tend to cancel each other.

Some idea of rural-urban differences in fertility and mortality can be gained by comparing the total birth and death rates in the most rural states with those in the most urban states. As is shown in Table 33, Mississippi, the state with the highest percentage in the proportion of rural population, had a crude birth rate of 24.1 per thousand population and a crude death rate of 10.7. In contrast, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, which rank first and second in the percentage of urban population, each had birth rates of 15.2 per thousand population and death rates of 11.2 and 11.8 respectively. New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, the only states that had birth rates under 15 per thousand all rank high with respect to the percentage of population living in urban areas. And with the exception of Connecticut, the states in which the population was predominantly urban all had death rates that were higher than even the highest crude death rate of the predominantly rural states. The differences in crude birth and death rates between these two groups of urban and rural states are to some extent affected by regional differences, since most of the rural states are in the South. The figures on fertility presented in Table 34 indicate, however, that regional location is less important than rural-urban residence in influencing differentials in birth rates.

---

[1] Birth and death rates that are not adjusted to take into account age differences in the populations are termed "crude" rates.

The numbers of births and deaths occurring in a given population are significantly affected by the age composition of that population. For death rates are highest among very young children and old people, while birth rates are highest among women who are between 20 and 35 years of age. Thus, precise comparisons of mortality and fertility rates between urban and rural groups necessitate making allowances for the differences discussed in the preceding chapter, in the age composition of the two groups. The last column in Table 33 gives death rates that have been adjusted according to these age differences. Such age adjustments generally raise the rates in the more rural states and lower those in the more urban ones. Comparably adjusted birth rates are not available, but measures of fertility that allow for age composition (Table 34) indicate that a similar standardization for age in computing birth rates would also raise the rural and lower the urban rates.

TABLE 33

Crude Birth and Death Rates and Rates of Natural Increase, Eight Most Rural States and Eight Most Urban States, 1940

State	Per Cent Rural Population	Rates per 1,000 Population			Age-Adjusted Death Rate	State	Per Cent Urban Population	Rates per 1,000 Population			Age-Adjusted Death Rate
		Birth	Death	Natural Increase				Birth	Death	Natural Increase	
Mississippi	80.2	24.1	10.7	13.4	12.4	Rhode Island	91.6	15.2	11.2	4.0	10.6
North Dakota	79.4	20.5	8.2	12.3	8.6	Massachusetts	89.4	15.2	11.8	3.4	10.3
Arkansas	77.8	19.7	8.8	10.9	10.0	New York	82.8	14.5	11.1	3.4	10.9
South Carolina	77.5	23.5	10.7	12.8	13.5	New Jersey	81.6	14.4	11.0	3.4	11.0
South Dakota	75.4	18.7	8.9	9.8	8.6	Illinois	73.6	15.8	11.3	4.5	10.8
North Carolina	72.7	22.5	8.9	13.6	11.3	California	71.0	16.3	11.5	4.8	10.3
West Virginia	71.9	22.2	9.3	12.9	10.7	Connecticut	67.8	14.9	10.6	4.3	9.9
Kentucky	70.2	22.4	10.5	11.9	10.8	Ohio	66.8	16.6	11.4	5.2	10.5

Source: Per cent of population in residence classes compiled from 1940 Population Census data. Birth and death rates from Vital Statistics of the United States 1940, Part II, Place of Residence. Age-adjusted death rates from Vital Statistics — Special Reports, Selected Studies. Volume 23, No. 1, "Age-Adjusted Death Rates in the United States, 1900–40."

The present low death rates in the United States, both rural and urban, bear witness to remarkable progress that has taken place during the last generation in medical science and in provision of sanitation, public health, and hospital facilities. Indeed, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company recently reported that among its many millions of policyholders the age-adjusted death rate for people between 1 and 74 years of age dropped from 12.8 per thousand to 6.0 during the thirty-five-year period between 1911–15 and 1941–5, representing a decrease of 53 per cent, while among its policyholders the expectation of life at birth rose from 46⅔ years in 1911–12 to 65 years in 1945. Moreover, the National Office of Vital Statistics has reported striking improvements in the rates of mortality among infants. In 1915 there were 99.9 infant deaths for every thousand live births. By 1940 this rate had dropped to 47.0, and in the next four years the rate of infant deaths continued to drop, so that in 1946 there were only 33.8 deaths per thousand live births.

There is no question but that further advances need to be made in the provision of adequate medical care for certain sectors of the population of the United States, and these advances will in turn reduce mortality rates to an even lower level. But general mortality is already so low in both the rural and the urban populations of the United States as compared with most countries of the world that present and prospective rural-urban differences are not great enough to have important effects on the rates of natural increase of the two groups.

Fertility Differentials and Their Trends

The most important dynamic population factor in the United States is the high fertility of women in rural areas. In fact, in commenting in his *Research Memorandum on Population Redistribution in the United States* on the different rates of reproduction among population groups, Dr. Rupert B. Vance wrote:

> Differential reproduction, left to itself, would in a generation more completely redistribute the population than is normally done by migration. The effect would be to concentrate population in the unskilled and semiskilled occupations and in agricultural and mountain areas.

This high fertility in rural areas causes many youths and adults who are produced in excess of replacement needs to migrate to urban areas. The migration in turn produces a deficit in the rural population of young women in the age groups that have the highest birth rates. It is primarily for this reason, as well as for other reasons that affect age composition, that the crude birth rate of the rural population (which relates births to the total rural population) *understates* the actual fertility rate of rural women, and that the crude urban birth rate *overstates* the fertility of urban women. From data on the relation of young children to women of child-bearing age, the Bureau of the Census has issued net reproduction rates for urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm women that, as shown by Table 34, reveal much more clearly the true fertility differences among these groups. While the definition of the net reproduction rate is highly technical and not easy to understand, the differences in rates clearly indicate that rural-farm women have much higher levels of fertility than urban women have, while the fertility of rural-nonfarm women is at an intermediate level.

For the period between 1935 and 1940 the net reproduction rate of rural-farm women in the United States was 1,661 per thousand. This means that if a thousand girl babies born in this period were to manifest, until the end of their childbearing period, the same birth and death rates at each age as the rural-farm population manifested between 1935 and 1940, they would be succeeded by 1,661 live-born daughters. Another way of interpreting the rate is to regard it as representing the ratio of the next female generation to the present one, provided that the rural-farm population had the age-sex composition it would eventually attain if the birth and death rates manifested by each age group during the 1935–40 period were maintained indefinitely. Under these circumstances the next female generation would be 66.1 per cent larger than today's. These are, of course, purely hypothetical assumptions that no one expects to be realized in the future. Therefore, net reproduction rates should not be interpreted as *predicted* rates of growth. Their utility, rather, is in reflecting fertility *differences* among women of child-bearing age in order to compare various population groups at a given time or conditions existing in the same group over the course of time.

TABLE 34

Net Reproduction Rates by Rural-Urban Residence, United States and Major Regions, 1905–10 and 1935–40

Area and Residence	Net Reproduction Rates *		Per Cent Change
	1935–40	1905–10	
UNITED STATES — total	978	1,336	−26.8
Urban	726	937	−22.5
Rural			
Rural-nonfarm	1,150	1,499	−23.3
Rural-farm	1,616	2,022	−17.9
NORTHEAST	794	1,120	−29.1
Urban	715	1,033	−30.8
Rural			
Rural-nonfarm	1,035	1,426	−27.4
Rural-farm	1,406	1,439	−2.3
NORTH CENTRAL	944	1,308	−27.8
Urban	753	963	−21.8
Rural			
Rural-nonfarm	1,146	1,451	−21.0
Rural-farm	1,452	1,834	−20.8
SOUTH	1,182	1,614	−26.8
Urban	712	764	−6.8
Rural			
Rural-nonfarm	1,211	1,591	−23.9
Rural-farm	1,812	2,199	−17.6
WEST	941	1,166	−19.3
Urban	726	807	−10.0
Rural			
Rural-nonfarm	1,174	1,459	−19.5
Rural-farm	1,559	1,848	−15.6

* The net reproduction rate represents the number of daughters a cohort of 1,000 female infants beginning life together would have during the course of their lives if the cohort were subject to both the birth and death rates at each age level that prevailed at the time specified. These rates have been adjusted to allow for underenumeration of children under 5 years of age.

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Population, Differential Fertility, 1940 and 1910, Standardized Fertility Rates and Reproduction Rates, Table 7.

In the 1935–40 period the net reproduction rate of rural-farm women was about 130 per cent higher than that of urban women and 44 per cent higher than that of rural-nonfarm women. These figures clearly show that farm women did much more childbearing and child rearing than urban women did. The farm-city differentials in fertility are not so great in the various regions, except the South, as they are in the United States as a whole. It is the South that colors the whole picture, for the net reproduction rate for Southern rural-farm women was nearly 155 per cent higher than that for Southern urban women.

During the thirty years preceding the 1935–40 period, fertility declined, although not at the same rate, among every residence group of women in every region. For the United States as a whole the net reproduction rate declined 27 per cent, which was a sharper decrease than occurred in any one of the residence groups, since an important factor in the explanation for the decline was the increase in the proportion of the population living in urban areas and a decrease in the proportion living on farms. A decline in fertility has been the record of every country that has gone through a process of rapid urbanization and industrialization. And the consequent adoption of a small-family pattern in contrast to the large-family pattern that prevailed in earlier decades has led to an increasing degree of control of fertility. For although in certain countries other factors, such as postponement of marriage, have been important in controlling fertility, the most important factor in the United States has been the practice by married couples of some type of birth control, including abstinence and methods called "natural," as well as the use of contraceptive devices.

For the United States as a whole the percentage of decline between 1905–10 and 1935–40 in the rural-farm net reproduction rates was not so great as in the nonfarm rates. Thus the farm-nonfarm fertility differential widened during this period. Regions varied considerably, however, with respect to their farm and nonfarm rates of change. In the Northeast, for instance, where rural-farm fertility in 1905–10 was the lowest, it decreased during the next thirty years by only 2 per cent, while urban fertility decreased 31 per cent. In contrast, the South, which in 1905–10 had the lowest urban net reproduction rate of any region, showed an urban fertility decrease of only 7 per cent during the next thirty years, while the rural-farm fertility rate decreased 18 per cent.

In this country the pattern whereby changes take place in fertility is complex. In an effort to explore the factors associated with the changes in fertility that occur in the several residence groups, analyses were made of the relationships between the percentage of decline in fertility and other factors. (Actually, in these analyses the *gross* reproduction rate rather than the *net* reproduction rate was used in order to reflect only changes in fertility rather than the changes in mortality and fertility combined.) The forty-eight states show little relationship between the percentage of decline in urban and rural-farm gross reproduction rates in the period from 1905–10 to 1935–40. In the states in which urban fertility declined fastest, rural-farm fertility sometimes showed high and sometimes low rates of decline, indicating that the factors that operated to reduce the fertility in a given state did not necessarily effect the same reduction in its farm and city populations.

The states, however, showed a high correlation between the rate of urbanization during the period and the rate at which rural-farm fertility decreased. Those states in which the proportion of population living in urban areas increased rapidly during the period tended to have the largest percentages of decrease in the reproduction rates of their farm women. An increase in urbanization in a state is brought about mainly by the shifting of rural-farm and rural-nonfarm residents to cities. The analysis suggests, however, that the process is not one-way in its effects. For in states where many farm people moved to cities, there seems to have been a greater adoption on the part of the remaining farm residents of the "urban" trait of fertility control. Closer ties of communication with family members who had moved to cities may have facilitated the adoption of urban ways by the farm people in a state undergoing rapid urbanization. At the same time, the urban fertility in such states may not fall as rapidly as in states that have long been urbanized, for the urban population is continuously receiving rural migrants who bring with them patterns of higher fertility.

Rural-Urban and Farm-Nonfarm Migration

If there were no migration away from rural areas, the high fertility rates of rural women would cause a rapid growth in the rural population. A very rapid rate of growth did indeed take place in the rural population of the United States through 1910.[2] Since 1910 the rural-nonfarm population has continued to increase, but the rural-farm population has decreased during each five-year period except 1930–4, even though this part of the nation's population has continued to have each year the highest excess of births over deaths.

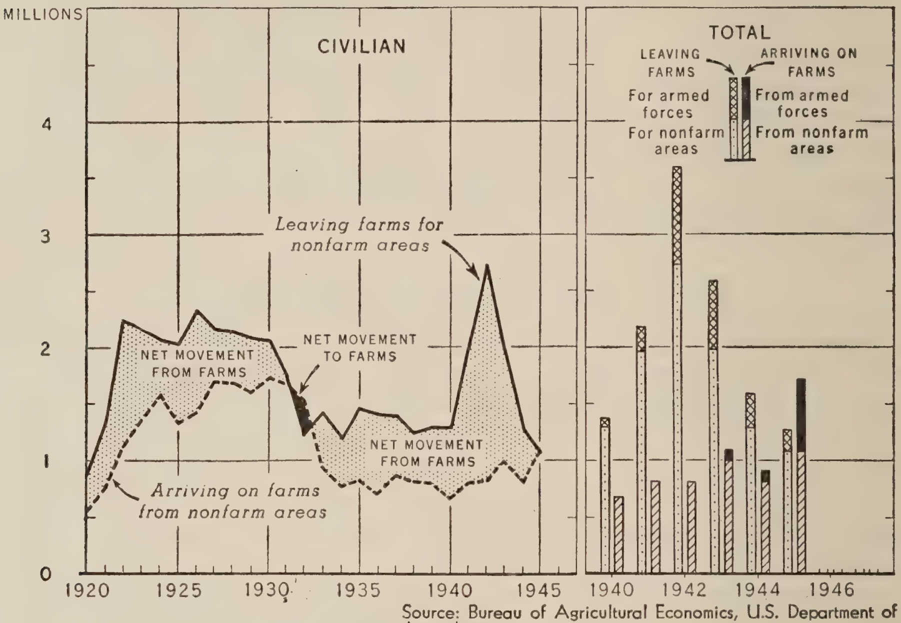
In the rural-urban migration that occurred between 1920 and 1940, the farm population had a net loss of eleven million persons, while the rural-nonfarm population had small net gains through migration during those decades. Thus it was the farm population that was the main source of those who left rural areas for the cities in that period, although the approximate net balance in the rural-nonfarm migrations involved many moves to villages and rural towns on the part of farm residents and many moves to cities on the part of town and village residents. Consequently more attention is focused in this chapter on net migration from farms than on migration to and from the rural-nonfarm population.

The United States, unlike some European countries, does not have a system that requires its citizens to register each time they change residence. For this reason statistics are not usually available on the total amount of mobility of the people during a given period. The estimates of migration that are available for most sectors of the population have to be made by comparing the size of the population at two census dates with the change that would have occurred from natural increase during the period and then *attributing* the difference to migration. But for a given amount of net change from migration during a period, the total number of moves in both directions is generally not known. An exception occurs in the case of the 1940 Population Census which obtained information on persons who migrated between 1935 and 1940.[3] Another exception is in the case of the farm population, since the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has issued for the years since 1920 annual estimates of moves to and from farms as well as net migration figures.

---

[2] See Fig. 18, Chap. 12 (page 218).

In examining the estimated annual migration to and from farms between 1920 and 1945, two features are immediately apparent:[4] (1) the much greater amount of *total* movement in both directions than of *net* movement; and (2) the great variation over the period in the amount of *net* movement. The first feature indicates that many more persons are involved in the migration process whereby they shift their residences than the net figures for each year would suggest. In fact, during this twenty-six-year period the average number of total moves made each year among persons who were living on farms before they moved to nonfarm areas was 1,703,000, which represents a number equal to 5.6 per cent of the period's average annual farm population. Partly offsetting this movement away from farms was a movement by an annual average of 1,119,000 persons who came to farms from nonfarm areas. But even the figures on total movement to and from farms and nonfarm areas do not give the whole picture of migration among



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 21 MOVEMENT TO AND FROM FARMS, UNITED STATES, 1920–45 *

* Births and deaths not taken into account

---

[3] For an analysis of these migration data, see Henry S. Shryock and Hope T. Eldridge: "Internal Migration in Peace and War," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. XII, No. 1, February 1947, pp, 27–39.

[4] See chart (Fig. 21).

farm people, for the many who move from one farm to another during a given year are excluded from this chart. Thus while farming communities have certain attributes that make for stability and continuity of associations, the amount of interchange of population with other communities has an important effect on community organization and social participation.

The stability from year to year of the farm population's birth rates and death rates means that the rate of natural increase of the total population, or of the population of working age, is maintained fairly evenly. Although the rate of natural increase is a major factor in "pushing" people to migrate away from farms, the great variation in the amount of net migration during different times in the 1920–45 period must have been brought about by other factors. As a matter of fact, the availability of nonfarm jobs in cities, towns, and villages appears to act as the main factor in drawing people away from farm population, and this availability in turn varies with the up-and-down swings in the business cycle which have long characterized our economy. The amount and percentage of annual net migration from farms during each five-year period since 1920, which are shown in Table 35, clearly reflect the important role played by this nonagricultural phase of the economy in affecting the rate of migration from farms. For the highest annual average rates of migration from farms took place in the 1940–4 period, when wartime demands for manpower became almost unlimited. The next highest rates were in the 1920–9 period, which was one of fairly general economic prosperity in the nonagricultural part of the economy. And the migration rate fell lowest in the depression period of 1930–4. In fact, during one year of this period the balance showed a small amount of net migration *to* farms. It is consistent that the slow economic recovery in the 1935–9 period was accompanied by a rising rate of migration from farms.

TABLE 35

Net Migration from Farms, Annual Average Number, Excluding Men Entering Armed Forces, for 5-year Periods, United States and Major Regions, 1920–45

Period	United States		Northeast		North Central		South		West	
	Number	Per Cent of Population at Beginning of Period	Number	Per Cent of Population at Beginning of Period	Number	Per Cent of Population at Beginning of Period	Number	Per Cent of Population at Beginning of Period	Number	Per Cent of Population at Beginning of Period
	(000)		(000)		(000)		(000)		(000)	
1920–24	666	2.1	35	1.4	204	2.0	393	2.3	35	1.6
1925–29	593	1.9	43	1.8	172	1.8	371	2.2	8	.4
1930–34	195	.6	7*	.3*	42	.4	134	.8	26	1.2
1935–39	555	1.7	10	.4	196	2.0	321	1.9	27	1.1
1940–44	1,027	3.4	45	1.9	298	3.2	643	4.0	41	1.7

* Movement to farms.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, "Farm Population Estimates, United States and Major Geographic Divisions, 1910–46," June 1946 and "Farm Population Estimates, January 1948," June 1948.

Migration from farms was not affected uniformly in various regions of the country by the general economic situation during the period between 1920 and 1944, although no region departed radically from the pattern exhibited in the United States as a whole. In the South, for instance, the migration rates from farms during each five-year period were somewhat higher than those for the country as a whole, since the rates of natural increase are highest there. And in the Dust Bowl states the drought years of 1934 and 1936 produced very heavy rates of migration from farms. Since the country at that time had more than ten million unemployed persons, many who left the Dust Bowl could not find permanent jobs and were forced to become more or less permanent migrants, taking casual labor jobs wherever they could find them. The plight of these displaced farmers, who with their families went west as migratory farm workers, has been realistically portrayed by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath.* The Southwest also revealed the operation of another factor, for the introduction of mechanization into cotton farming served to push people off of farms during the 1930–40 decade.

In four of the five-year periods following 1920 the net shift from farms to cities, towns, and villages averaged more than half a million persons a year, and in the most recent period, 1940–4, it reached more than a million persons a year. Although precise data are not available on the composition of these people, special spot studies have indicated that about half the recent migrants from farms were workers and about half were dependents. Thus since 1920, except during the depression years of 1930–4, the net annual additions of fresh recruits from farms to the nonfarm labor force in the United States have ranged from a quarter million to a half million workers. The farm population, then, has provided an important share of the workers needed for the industrial expansion that took place in the nation during the past twenty-five years. Another way of looking at this farm-city migration is to consider that urban industries have provided an important share of the jobs needed by young people who were brought up on farms.

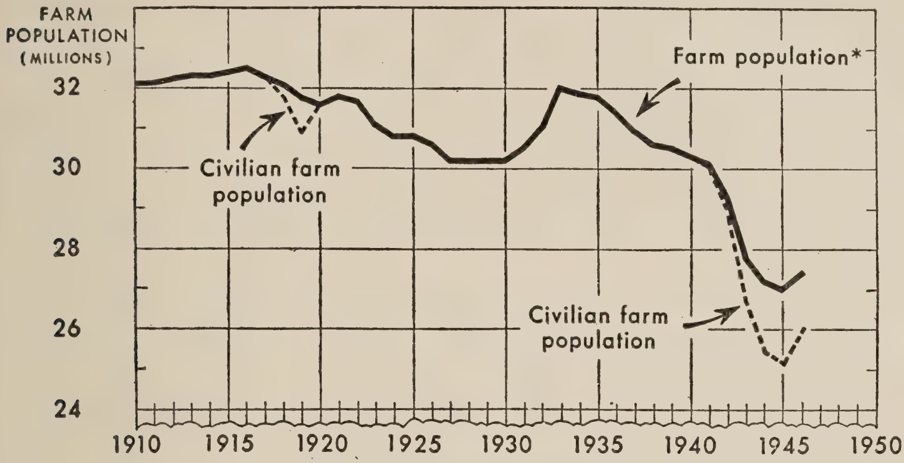
Trends in the Farm Population

The course of the farm population of the United States since 1910[5] reflects most of the important phases of the nation's history during these three and a half decades. Thus from 1910 to 1916 there was a slight growth in the farm population, as nonfarm employment opportunities were not expanding rapidly enough to provide new jobs for all the increase in the number of persons of working age in this country and for the European immigrants, who at that time averaged nearly a million a year. Between 1916 to 1919 — that is, during World War I — the farm population dropped moderately in response to the civilian and military needs for manpower. After the end of World War I a part of this drop was regained as a result of demobilization and the short depression of the early 1920's. From 1922 to 1930 the decline in farm population was resumed, for there were sufficient nonfarm jobs available to permit the farm youths who were in excess of replacement needs to migrate to cities if they wished.

---

[5] See chart (Fig. 22).

The stock market crash late in 1929, which signaled the beginning of the great depression, was followed the next year by an increase in the farm population, and by January 1933 the farm population had nearly two million more persons than it had had three years earlier. This increase was caused mainly by a drop in the rate of migration from farms, rather than by an increase in the rate of migration to farms. Nevertheless, in certain areas of the country there was a heavy return flow to areas of subsistence farming of persons who had migrated to cities in the years shortly before the depression. For in the early part of the depression there were no provisions for unemployment compensation, no special categories of public assistance such as are now carried on under the Social Security Act, and no public-welfare systems adequate to meet the tremendous relief load resulting from mass unemployment. This situation tended to encourage former farm residents who were without means of support to return to farms, where they could at least eke out a subsistence even though they did not produce much in the way of farm products for sale.



*INCLUDING PERSONS WHO ENTERED ARMED FORCES DIRECTLY FROM A FARM RESIDENCE

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 22 FARM POPULATION, UNITED STATES, 1910–46

With the slight stirrings of national economic recovery in the mid-1930's, there was an even greater response in the matter of migration from farms than the general level of economic activity would be expected to call forth, for many young people who had not thought it wise to move to cities during the depression had literally been dammed up on farms without adequate employment. Thus, during the latter half of the 1930–40 decade the rate of migration from farms almost reached that of the preceding decade, even though high levels of urban unemployment still existed and youths who left farms for cities were not always able to find jobs easily.

World War II began in the fall of 1939, and its effects were felt almost immediately in a pickup of economic activity in the United States as demands for exports increased and the national defense program got under way. The rate of net civilian migration from farms, increasing moderately in 1940, rose very steeply in the next two years, so that in 1942 it reached nearly two million persons. This net loss to the farm population through migration was over and above the loss it received through induction and enlistment of farm men into the armed forces. During the World War II period the production of war goods and essential civilian commodities for ourselves and our allies made the need for manpower so great that the difficulty of finding a job in an urban center practically ceased to exist as a barrier to migration. As a consequence many farm people who had been deterred from migration during the years when urban unemployment was high now moved to cities, constituting a migration in addition to that of the normal number of farm youth who each year reached maturity and were in excess of replacement needs. Farm population changes during the years from January 1940 to January 1945, which included most of the national defense and World War II period, can be briefly summarized as follows:

(1) A net loss of 5,136,000 persons of all ages who either moved away from farms to cities, towns, or villages (civilian migration), or who were living on places that are no longer classified as farms because agricultural operations had ceased;

(2) A net loss of 1,850,000 persons who were living on farms at the time they enlisted or were inducted into the armed forces;

(3) A net addition of 1,907,000 persons through the excess of births over deaths in the farm population;

(4) As a result of these changes from specific causes, an over-all net decrease of 5,079,000 persons.

With the end of the war in August 1945, the rapid curtailment of the manufacture of war goods and the demobilization of men in the armed forces tended to halt the wartime trend whereby the farm population was decreasing. And by April 1946 the farm population was 1,500,000 greater than it had been a year earlier, with 60 per cent of this increase consisting of men between 20 and 44 years of age. By April 1947, about half of the wartime loss had been regained, but the number of people living on farms was still about 8 per cent lower than in the prewar year of 1940.

The prospects regarding future trends in the farm population will be greatly affected by three factors: the changing need for workers in agriculture, the alternative need for workers in urban areas, and the trend in nonfarm employment of farm residents. The recent and prospective changes in these factors, together with their implications for future levels of the farm population, are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 14

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS OF RURAL POPULATION

BY LOUIS J. DUCOFF AND MARGARET JARMAN HAGOOD

Decreasing Proportion of the Nation's Workers in Agriculture

DURING the past century, as the United States developed from an almost wholly agrarian country to one with the most advanced state of industrialization, there have been tremendous shifts in the occupations followed by the nation's workers. But a study of these occupational shifts reveals more than a mere outline of the pace of that industrialization, for it also discloses a great deal about the changing manner of life of the country's people, as was well stated by Dr. Alba Edwards near the end of his thirty-five years of work in the field of occupational statistics at the Bureau of the Census:

> The most nearly dominant single influence in a man's life is probably his occupation. More than anything else, perhaps, a man's occupation determines his course and his contribution in life. And when life's span is ended, quite likely there is no other single set of facts that will tell so well the kind of man he was and the part he played in life as will a detailed and chronological statement of the occupation, or occupations, he pursued. Indeed, there is no other single characteristic that tells so much about a man and his status — social, intellectual, and economic — as does his occupation. A man's occupation not only tells, for each workday, what he does during one-half of his waking hours, but it indicates, with some degree of accuracy, his manner of life during the other half — the kind of associates he will have, the kind of clothes he will wear, the kind of house he will live in and even, to some extent, the kind of food he will eat. And, usually, it indicates, in some degree, the cultural level of his family.
>
> . . . And, were the figures available, the social and industrial history of a people might be traced more accurately through detailed statistics of the occupations of its gainful workers than through records of its wars, its territorial conquests, and its political struggles. (From the Preface to *Comparative Occupation Statistics for the United States, 1870 to 1940.*)

The historical record of industrialization and urbanization in the United States is certainly well traced by the sharp upward trend in the proportion of workers engaged in nonagricultural occupations and the corresponding decrease in the proportion engaged in agriculture (Table 36). And the decline in the proportion of workers engaged in agriculture from 72 per cent in 1820 to 18 per cent in 1940 was accompanied by a decline from 93 per cent to 44 per cent in the proportion of the population living in rural areas. It was during this period that the United States underwent the transition from a predominantly agricultural to a highly industrialized nation. While other factors were also involved, the condition basic to such a transition was the rising productivity of agricultural workers. In 1820 the average amount of food and fiber produced by an agricultural worker was sufficient to meet the needs of about five people including himself, while in 1940 each agricultural worker produced enough, on the average, for fifteen people including himself. This rising productivity over those hundred and twenty years meant that an increasing proportion of the nation's manpower could be devoted to trade, services, manufacturing, and transportation, with an increasing amount and variety of goods and services per capita being both produced and consumed. In the same period, moreover, the process of industrialization and the development of specialized mass-production industries were accompanied by pronounced gains in the productivity of industrial labor. As a result of these technological advances in the agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy during the last century, the population's level of living rose greatly.

TABLE 36

The Labor Force of the United States, in Two Large Occupational Classes — Agricultural Pursuits and Nonagricultural Pursuits, 1820 to 1940

(Persons 10 Years Old and Over)

Census Year	All Occupations	Agricultural Pursuits		Nonagricultural Pursuits	
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
1820	2,881,000	2,068,958	71.8	812,042	28.2
1830	3,931,537	2,772,453	70.5	1,159,084	29.5
1840	5,420,000	3,719,951	68.6	1,700,049	31.4
1850	7,697,196	4,901,882	63.7	2,795,314	36.3
1860	10,532,750	6,207,634	58.9	4,325,116	41.1
1870	12,924,951	6,849,772	53.0	6,075,179	47.0
1880	17,392,099	8,584,810	49.4	8,807,289	50.6
1890	23,318,183	9,938,373	42.6	13,379,810	57.4
1900	29,073,233	10,911,998	37.5	18,161,235	62.5
1910	37,370,794	11,591,767	31.0	25,779,027	69.0
1920	42,433,535	11,448,770	27.0	30,984,765	73.0
1930	48,829,920	10,471,998	21.4	38,357,922	78.6
1940	52,148,251	9,162,547	17.6	42,985,704	82.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series P–9, No. 11, *Trends in Proportion of the Nation's Labor Force Engaged in Agriculture: 1820–1940.*

Note: For footnotes explaining noncomparability of data for various census years, see the above release, Series P–9, No. 11.

In the process of industrialization many changes occurred within agriculture which were reflected in the population's occupational shifts and in the type of work that was done by those who continued to work in agriculture. For instance, much of the processing of agricultural products – canning, preserving, storing, slaughtering, the making of butter and cheese – that was formerly done on the farm was transferred to commercial nonfarm establishments. In addition, many types of work that required the skilled labor of carpenters, blacksmiths, and machine repairers were gradually shifted from the farm to specialized establishments, while the improvement of farm implements and machinery made farm work less arduous and added to the effectiveness of the workers. Strains of plants and of livestock were developed which were more resistant to disease and weather and which yielded more produce per hour of human labor. In the latter part of the period, motor power began to replace animal power, and by 1940 about half the horses and mules that had been on farms twenty-five-years earlier had been replaced by tractors and trucks. The development of many sorts of power-driven machines has meant that on well-equipped farms, although hand and stoop labor have by no means been eliminated from agriculture, certain farm work now requires mechanical skills rather than physical brawn. And finally, the substitution of machinery and mechanical power for human labor and animal power have not only enhanced the effectiveness of human effort in agricultural work, but have also freed large acreages for the production of food instead of feed for work stock.

Although the percentage of all workers engaged in agriculture decreased during each decade between 1820 and 1940, the total number of agricultural workers increased during each decade up through 1910, when it reached 11,600,000. Since 1910 the number has been decreasing, with the result that in 1940 there were only about as many agricultural workers as there had been in 1885, when the total population was only about 42 per cent as great. The further reduction that took place during World War II resulted in the total number of agricultural workers in 1945 being no greater than it had been in 1875, when the total population of the country was less than one third as great. Some writers have deplored the decrease in the number and proportion of the population living on farms and engaged in agriculture, but the only alternative would be to halt further increases in the productivity of agricultural workers. This could hardly be considered seriously in view of the fact that in the United States the value of production per agricultural worker is still far below that of nonagricultural workers. In 1939, for example, the value added by the agricultural production process per worker was not quite one third of the value added per worker in manufacturing industries. Professor Theodore Schultz has recently stated that while production per worker in nonagricultural industries and on the better-equipped farms of the United States is 30 to 40 per cent above that of workers in Great Britain, the output per worker on the least productive half of the country's commercial farms is so low that it is less than that in any western European country, and is not matched until one reaches the comparatively unproductive agriculture in some of the Balkan states.

The decrease between 1930 and 1940 in the proportion of all workers employed in agriculture was accompanied, as is shown in Table 37, by similar decreases in the proportions of urban, rural-nonfarm and rural-farm workers employed in agriculture. This signifies that the trend toward industrialization and urbanization was so strong in this country that even during a decade marked by depression and high levels of unemployment, the proportion of workers employed in agriculture continued to drop, and the proportion engaged in nonfarm work, even in rural areas, continued to rise. Thus, farm-resident workers employed in agriculture dropped from 86 per cent in 1930 to 78 per cent in 1940, while rural-nonfarm workers dropped from 11 per cent to 7 per cent, and even among urban workers the percentage engaged in agriculture dropped from 1.5 per cent to 1.0 per cent.

TABLE 37

Trends in Proportions of Workers Employed in Agriculture and Nonagricultural Industries, by Farm-Nonfarm Residence, 1930, 1940, and 1947

Date and Industry	Total *	Nonfarm Residents			Farm Residents‡
		Total	Urban	Rural-Nonfarm	
	Per Cent	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*
1930					
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	21.4	3.5	1.5	10.6	85.9
Nonagricultural industries	78.6	95.6	98.5	89.4	14.1
1940					
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	18.4	2.4	1.0	7.4	77.8
Nonagricultural industries	81.6	97.6	99.0	92.6	22.2
1947					
Total †	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	13.9	1.5	—	—	66.7
Nonagricultural industries	86.1	98.5	—	—	33.3

* Percentages based on number of gainfully occupied workers in 1930, and of employed workers in 1940 and 1947.

† Figures for 1947 are for April, as in the case of 1930 and 1940, and they relate only to employed workers in the civilian labor force.

‡ Data relate to rural-farm residents for 1930 and 1940 but to total farm residents for 1947.

Source: 1930 and 1940 data from Bureau of the Census, Population, Volume III, Reports by States and Population, The Labor Force (Sample Statistics), Industrial Characteristics, respectively. 1947 data from Bureau of the Census, Monthly Report on the Labor Force, May 14, 1947, and Bureau of the Census and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, *Farm Population Changes: 1940 to 1947*, Series Census–BAE, No. 11.

The explanation for the increasing proportion of rural workers employed in nonfarm occupations between 1930 and 1940 is partly the same for both the rural-farm and rural-nonfarm populations. To some extent the rise among farm residents may have been due to a somewhat broader inclusion of households in the farm population in 1940 than in 1930. But it is not likely that all of the increase in the proportion of farm residents engaged in nonfarm work was due to differences in the classification of residences by census enumerators. As a matter of fact, for both the rural-farm and the rural-nonfarm populations, the increase in the proportion having nonfarm jobs was to an important extent due to an increase in the number of rural dwellers who commuted daily to work in cities. Indeed, as improvements in roads and in public and private transportation facilities during the 1930's made it practicable for many urban workers who preferred living in villages or the open countryside to do so, the rural-nonfarm population showed an actual increase through migration. Although there was no net increase through migration in the case of the farm population, farm residents were in many instances spared the necessity of migrating, because they found it possible to obtain jobs in cities to which they could commute daily.

The 1940 and 1947 figures for farm and nonfarm residents show that this trend away from agricultural employment was accelerated during wartime. Separate figures are not available for the rural-nonfarm population, but the proportion of farm-resident workers employed in nonfarm work rose during these seven years from 22 per cent to 33 per cent. Thus, in the seventeen years following 1930, nonagricultural occupations more than doubled in importance among the farm population. Moreover, since these figures relate to a date twenty months after the capitulation of Japan, they probably understate the peak of nonfarm employment of farm people reached during wartime, for in many places war industries and other manufacturing establishments, by setting up bus routes to pick up rural workers each morning and return them after working hours, provided daily transportation over quite a radius.

Furthermore, although the total number of farm operators has been decreasing since 1934, there has been an increase in the number of farmers who work only part time at farming, as is shown in Table 38. Part-time farming was most common in the Northeast, where, in 1939, one fourth of all farm operators reported spending a hundred days or more in off-farm work, while the West, where about one fifth did so, was second in this respect. These are the regions that have the highest proportion of urban population, and as a result of the presence of many urban centers, more nonagricultural jobs were available to farm operators. Still, in only one of the nine major geographic divisions, the West North Central, did the proportion of part-time farm operators fall below 10 per cent. During World War II, the number and proportion of part-time farm operators increased in every major region of the United States.

No single criterion is satisfactory for defining "part-time" farmers, for as used by various writers the term may include such divergent cases as those represented by a man who regularly works full time at a nonfarm job, but who, living on a farm, spends a little time at farm work after regular working hours, on week ends, or during vacations; and by a man whose principal work and source of income is the operation of a farm, but who spends some minor part of the year in other work. (In the case of the former type, the farm operated is usually a small-scale one that, unless hired farm labor is employed, produces mainly products for home use.) In both cases, however, the part-time farmer represents an occupational pattern that involves less than complete dependence on agriculture. Another type of part-time farming, which is also numerically important, and which is discussed in the chapter on farm laborers, is that in which a farm operator spends part of the year operating his own farm, and part working for wages on farms operated by others. But for such part-time operators the off-farm work does not involve any lessening in the degree of economic dependence on agriculture. Most of these farm operators spend less than a hundred days of the year in hired farm work and they are therefore not included in the figures appearing in Table 38.

TABLE 38

Farm Operators Reporting 100 Days or More Worked Off Their Farms for Pay or Profit during Year, United States and Major Regions, 1939–44

Year	United States		Northeast		North Central		South		West	
	Number	Per Cent of All Farm Operators	Number	Per Cent of All Farm Operators	Number	Per Cent of All Farm Operators	Number	Per Cent of All Farm Operators	Number	Per Cent of All Farm Operators
1944	1,079,054	18.5	159,850	32.1	283,215	14.3	502,003	17.4	133,986	27.1
1939	943,581	15.5	117,260	24.3	274,098	13.1	437,822	14.6	114,401	22.4
1934	760,772	11.2	103,485	18.6	211,318	9.3	345,181	10.1	100,788	17.7
1929	723,269	11.5	94,888	19.7	189,664	9.1	349,310	10.8	89,407	17.8

Source: U.S. Censuses of Agriculture, 1930, 1935, 1940, and 1945.

Agricultural Workers in the Rural Population

In 1940 agricultural work was still the dominant occupation of workers living in rural areas, although slightly less than one half of the rural workers were employed in agriculture; and agricultural work naturally occupied a much higher proportion of workers living on farms (78 per cent) than of workers living in rural nonfarm or urban areas (7 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively). About 90 per cent of those engaged in agricultural work lived on farms, and the great majority of these worked on the farms on which they lived. The identity for farm workers of place of work with place of residence makes agriculture unique among the major industries and affects the nature of both farm work and farm family life.

The detailed data on agricultural workers obtained in the 1940 population census relate only to those workers who were actually doing farm work in the last week of March 1940, and they therefore understate the participation in seasonal work of unpaid family workers and hired workers. But, as may be seen in Table 39, even in such an early spring week there were over eight million persons at work on farms. This figure included about five million farmers, two million wage workers, and one million unpaid family workers in the country as a whole. Self-employed farmers in the North Central states constituted nearly 70 per cent of all agricultural workers, but in

TABLE 39

Selected Data on Workers Employed in Agriculture, United States and Major Regions, March 24–30, 1940

Area	Total Workers Employed in Agriculture		Farmers and Farm Managers	Wage Workers	Unpaid Family Workers	Nonwhite Workers as Percentage of Total	Female Workers as Percentage of Total	Male Workers Employed in Agriculture					
								Median Age			Median Grade of School Completed		
								Farmers and Farm Managers	Wage Workers	Unpaid Family Workers	Farmers and Farm Managers	Wage Workers	Unpaid Family Workers
	Number	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Years	Years	Years	Grades	Grades	Grades
UNITED STATES	8,233,624	100.0	62.5	23.4	14.1	18.5	5.7	46.6	30.3	19.8	7.6	7.3	7.8
Northeast	576,451	100.0	57.6	33.9	8.5	1.2	2.9	51.8	32.0	21.3	8.1	8.1	8.6
North Central	2,647,429	100.0	69.1	18.7	12.2	.7	2.2	47.5	28.4	20.8	8.1	8.2	8.5
South	4,295,841	100.0	60.1	22.5	17.4	33.4	8.6	44.5	28.8	19.3	6.6	5.1	6.7
West	713,903	100.0	55.7	37.6	6.7	8.8	3.7	48.7	33.1	21.3	8.2	8.0	9.4

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States. Population, Volume III, The Labor Force and Population, The Labor Force (Sample Statistics) Occupational Characteristics.

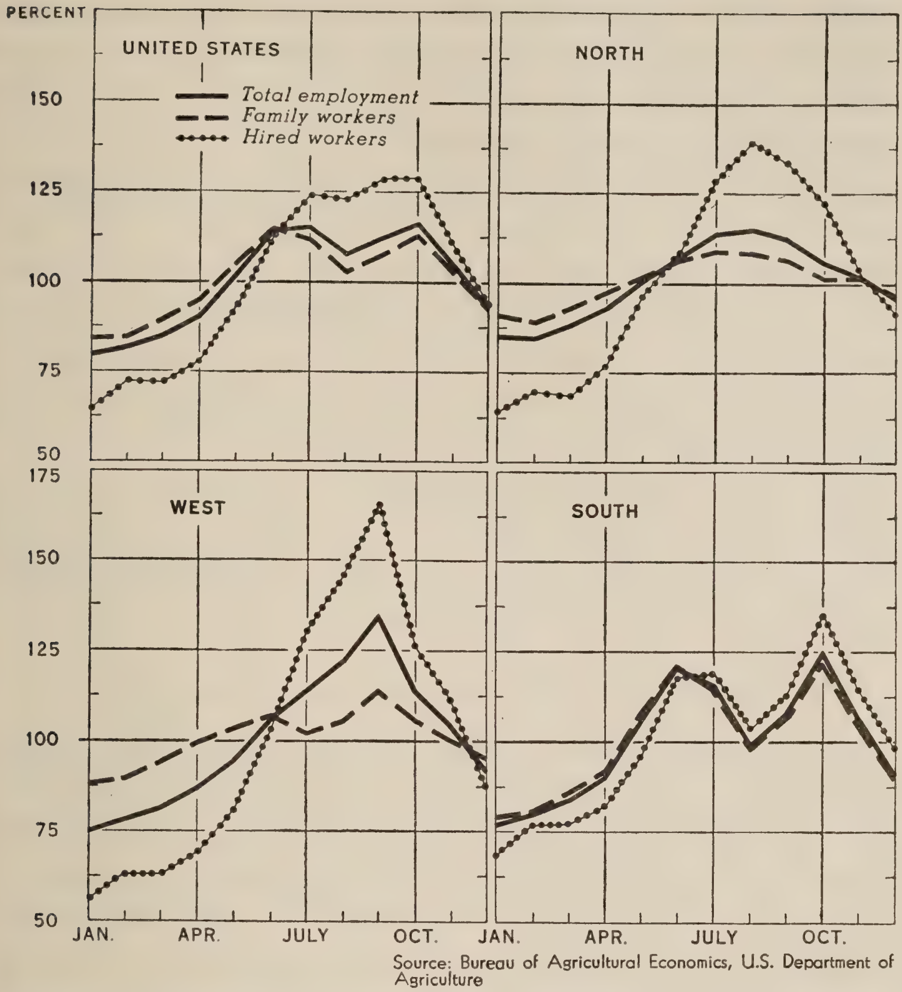
the West, where more of the farm work is done by hired laborers, they constituted a much lower proportion.

Agricultural workers include a larger than proportionate share of nonwhites, the great majority of whom are Negroes working on farms in the South. In 1940 one third of all Southern farm workers were nonwhite, as compared with less than one per cent who were nonwhite in the Northeast, while nearly a tenth of all agricultural workers in the West were Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos. (Data are not available on the numbers of Mexicans, or persons of Mexican extraction, employed in agriculture, but it is known that, especially in the West and Southwest, they form an important group.)

At the time of the census, women and girls formed only a very small proportion of persons employed in farm work, but there are several factors that account for this probably somewhat misleading picture. First, the type of work most generally under way on farms in March is the preparation of land for planting, and this is customarily done by men, while women and girls more frequently do hoeing and other types of hand cultivation "or hand operations" involved in the harvesting of cotton, vegetables, and fruits. And then, during the winter and early spring certain types of dairy and poultry chores, usually done by farm women, are to some extent taken over by the farmer or by other male members of the family.

As for men and boys at work on farms in 1940, there were striking differences in the ages of operators, wage workers, and unpaid family workers; the median age of farmers and farm managers was 47 years, while for hired workers it was 30 years, and for unpaid family workers, 20 years. Similar age differentials were found in every region, although all classes of workers were somewhat older in the Northeast and somewhat younger in the South. These figures on the ages of male agricultural workers would fit in with the theory of the agricultural ladder, which holds that a young man progresses from unpaid family work to hired work and then becomes an operator, first as a tenant and later as an owner. A cross-section picture such as that given by the census cannot, however, measure occupational mobility or prove the ladder theory, and information concerning the migration from farms that has occurred since 1940 indicates not only that a large proportion of the younger farm workers left agriculture, but also that the simple ladder theory is not applicable to the many who turned to nonfarm occupations.

Another aspect of rural life in the United States which has significance is the comparatively low average level of education existing among farm workers – an average less than that of every other major occupational group except domestic-service workers. The median grade of school completed by all farmers in the United States was 7.6 grades, while in the South it was less than 7 grades, and in the other regions slightly over 8 grades. Although their economic status is lower, hired farm workers had about the same average education as farm operators, except in the South where their average was lower. This near equality is explained mainly by the fact that hired workers were much younger than farm operators, and were therefore attending school on the average of about sixteen years later than the operators had at-



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 23 SEASONAL PATTERNS OF FARM EMPLOYMENT, UNITED STATES AND MAJOR REGIONS, 1943 *

* Monthly employment of each class of worker as percentage of its 12-month average, B.A.E. estimates.

tended. Thus they received the benefit of higher educational standards. In every region the median grade of school completed by unpaid family workers – the youngest of the three groups of farm workers – was higher than that completed by both farm operators and hired farm workers.

The highly seasonal nature of the employment pattern in agriculture is well known, but as another important feature of rural life and work, it deserves careful analysis. For the country as a whole the number of family workers (operators as well as unpaid family workers) is about one third higher during the summer and fall peaks than in midwinter, while the number of hired farm workers during the peak seasons is twice as high.[1] Quite naturally there is among family workers much more seasonal variation in the number of unpaid workers than in the number of operators, for, as in the case of hired workers, the majority of unpaid family workers are employed only during those times of the year when the labor needs are too great for the farm operator to meet alone.

---

[1] See chart (Fig. 23).

Unlike the age and education patterns, the patterns of seasonal farm employment show marked regional differences, which are produced by interrelated climatic and type-of-farming factors. In the North the peak month of employment of hired workers is August, while in the West it is September, and in the South, October. And in every region, because the regional peaks in hired farm employment do not coincide, there are sharper seasonal swings than there are for the United States as a whole, with the number of hired workers employed by farmers varying most over the course of a year in the Western states, where the number employed in early fall is nearly four times as great as the number employed in winter.

Other features of agricultural employment are discussed in the chapter on farm laborers, with special emphasis being placed on the employment and characteristics of hired farm workers. And in the chapters on the various type-of-farming belts there is fuller treatment of the employment features that are characteristic of different types of farming.

Nonagricultural Workers in the Rural Population

For rural workers the industry second in importance to agriculture is manufacturing, which in 1940 engaged 14 per cent of all rural workers (Table 40). Nor were all of these factory workers employed in rural establishments, since many of them commuted to work in near-by cities. Moreover, not all of the manufacturing establishments in rural areas use agricultural products as their raw material, and an even smaller proportion use agricultural products that were produced wholly or primarily in the immediately surrounding farming areas. As a result, the degree of connection between rural residents employed in manufacturing and the local agriculture varies greatly. For instance, a close complementary relationship does exist between the area's agriculture and its manufacturing establishments in the case of beet-sugar factories, vegetable-oil extraction plants, many fruit and vegetable canneries, and various types of establishments that process other agricultural products. Similarly, a complementary relationship exists in the case of some rural plants that manufacture fertilizer or other commodities destined to be sold primarily to local farmers.

After agriculture and manufacturing, the next most important occupations for rural workers were in wholesale and retail trade, which engaged about 10 per cent of all rural workers. Like the manufacturing establishments, the stores in which these workers were employed had a wide range in their degree of connection with the farming of the area. Many of them were in the county seats and other villages of the 1,225 completely rural counties and in small agricultural trade centers of other counties. On the other hand, some of the wholesale and retail establishments employing rural residents were within metropolitan cities or in their suburban areas, where farmers formed only a small proportion of the clientele.

Within the rural population the industrial attachments of farm residents are strikingly different from that of persons in the rural-nonfarm population. Living on a farm does not necessarily mean that a worker must be employed in agriculture. Still, in 1940, 77.8 per cent of all farm-resident workers were so employed, as compared with only 7.4 per cent of rural-nonfarm workers and 1 per cent of urban workers. And because such a large proportion of farm-resident workers were employed in agriculture, the proportion employed in any other major industry was smaller for this group than for the rural-nonfarm or urban workers. Thus, while smaller percentages of rural-nonfarm workers than of urban workers were employed in about half of the major industry groups shown in Table 40, the percentages were not so small as those of workers living on farms. These industry groups included the numerically most important — manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, personal services, and transportation and communication — but in six of the nonagricultural industry groups there were larger proportions of rural-nonfarm than of urban workers. The six groups were: the two extractive groups other than agriculture, that is: forestry and fishing, and mining; construction; business and repair services; professional and related services; and government. For the United States as a whole, then, the industrial composition

TABLE 40

Industry of Employed Workers, by Rural-Urban Residence, United States, 1940

Industry Group	Urban	Rural		
		Total	Rural-Nonfarm	Rural-Farm
	Per Cent	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	1.0	45.7	7.4	77.8
Nonagricultural industries	97.1	52.5	90.3	20.9
Forestry and fishing	.1	.4	.7	.2
Mining	1.0	3.6	6.5	1.2
Construction	4.8	4.2	6.8	2.1
Manufacturing	29.1	14.3	24.1	6.1
Transportation, communication, and other public utilities	8.7	4.0	7.1	1.4
Wholesale and retail trade	21.3	9.3	16.9	2.9
Finance, insurance, and real estate	4.7	1.1	2.1	.3
Business and repair services	2.2	1.4	2.5	.5
Personal services	10.8	5.8	9.1	2.9
Amusement, recreation, and related services	1.2	.4	.8	.1
Professional and related services	8.6	5.3	8.7	2.5
Government	4.6	2.7	5.0	.7
Unclassified	1.9	1.8	2.3	1.3

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, The Labor Force (Sample Statistics), Industrial Characteristics.

of rural-nonfarm workers with respect to the most important industry groupings (agriculture, manufacturing, and trade) was intermediate between that of rural-farm and urban workers (although much nearer to the urban than to the rural-farm), with little difference appearing in other industries except for the extractive.

The census classifies workers both by industry (the kind of establishment in which they work) and by occupation (the kind of job they do). These two types of classification supplement each other in providing information on the manner in which workers gain their livelihood, and they are both useful in showing rural-urban differences. But since workers reporting farm occupations are almost identical with those reporting that they work in agricultural establishments, although the latter group includes a relatively small number of workers who are employed by farmers for such miscellaneous jobs as truck driving, bookkeeping, and stenography, it is mainly among nonagricultural workers that "industry" and "occupation" statistics provide somewhat different types of information.

TABLE 41

Occupation of Employed Workers, by Rural-Urban Residence, United States, 1940

Occupation Group	Urban	Rural		
		Total	Rural-Nonfarm	Rural-Farm
	Per Cent	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Farm occupations	.8	45.6	6.3	78.2
Farmers and farm managers	.3	28.8	1.6	51.4
Farm laborers (unpaid family workers)	—	6.6	.2	11.9
Farm laborers (wage workers) and farm foremen	.5	10.2	4.5	14.9
Nonfarm occupation	98.4	53.6	92.6	21.2
Professional and semiprofessional workers	9.0	4.9	8.3	2.2
Proprietors, managers, and officials, except farm	9.9	5.9	11.0	1.6
Clerical, sales, and kindred workers	22.9	6.9	12.3	2.3
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	13.3	7.8	13.7	3.0
Operatives and kindred workers	21.4	13.4	23.2	5.3
Domestic service workers	5.3	3.7	5.4	2.3
Protective service workers	1.7	1.2	2.4	.2
Service workers, except domestic and protective	8.2	2.9	5.4	.9
Laborers, except farm and mine	6.7	6.9	10.9	3.4
Unclassified	.8	.8	1.1	.6

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Volume III, The Labor Force.

Rural-farm and rural-nonfarm workers show such great differences in industrial attachments and occupational composition that they should be considered separately for comparisons with urban workers. Moreover, when rural-farm workers are compared with either urban or rural-nonfarm workers, the great preponderance of farm workers in the former group overshadows all other comparisons. Thus, the comparison of nonagricultural occupational patterns among the three residence groups is most meaningful when restricted to the rural-nonfarm and urban populations.

As Table 41 shows, the nonfarm occupational group in which the greatest difference exists between rural-nonfarm and urban workers is that of clerical, sales, and kindred work. In 1940 these types of jobs accounted for 22.9 per cent of all urban workers, but for only 12.3 per cent of rural-nonfarm workers. In all other nonfarm occupational groups, except professional and miscellaneous services, rural-nonfarm workers constituted higher percentages than urban workers, with the difference being most marked in the case of laborers other than those in farming and mining.

TABLE 42

Median Wage-and-Salary Income of Rural-Nonfarm and Urban Families (with All Workers Wage or Salary Workers) for Selected Occupations of Head of Household, United States and Major Regions, 1939

Area and Residence	All Families with Only Wage or Salary Income	Occupation of Head of Household: Professional and Semi-professional	Clerical, Sales, and Kindred Workers	Craftsmen, Foremen, and Kindred Workers	Operatives and Kindred Workers
	Dollars	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*
UNITED STATES					
Rural-nonfarm	1,024	1,655	1,594	1,426	1,139
Urban	1,483	2,227	1,838	1,695	1,389
NORTHEAST					
Rural-nonfarm	1,286	2,062	1,825	1,525	1,249
Urban	1,595	2,408	1,962	1,770	1,451
NORTH CENTRAL					
Rural-nonfarm	1,057	1,485	1,517	1,403	1,210
Urban	1,528	2,204	1,821	1,738	1,442
SOUTH					
Rural-nonfarm	771	1,544	1,480	1,287	957
Urban	1,111	2,004	1,701	1,446	1,073
WEST					
Rural-nonfarm	1,235	1,625	1,658	1,581	1,369
Urban	1,545	2,117	1,768	1,710	1,516

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Families, Family Wage and Salary Income in 1939, Regions and Cities of 1,000,000 or More.

The differences in the occupational composition of rural-nonfarm and urban workers of course affect the average wages and income of rural-nonfarm and urban families. In 1939 the median for urban families receiving only wage-and-salary income was $1,483, which is to be compared with $1,024 for rural-nonfarm families (Table 42). Not more than a fifth of this 45 per cent difference could be accounted for by the fact that the number of workers per family in urban areas was slightly higher. Even within the same broad occupational groups the average wage-and-salary income of rural-nonfarm workers is generally lower than that of urban workers. In 1939 the median wage-and-salary income of urban families exceeded that of rural-nonfarm families by 34.6 per cent when the head of the household was employed in a professional or semiprofessional occupation, and by 15 to 22 per cent when he was in any of the other occupational groups shown in Table 42. This situation existed in every region, and the difference between the urban and rural-nonfarm figures fell as low as 12 per cent only among families of Southern operatives among the occupational groups shown. Despite the fact that the average number of workers per urban family is slightly larger, and that differences exist in the nature of occupation within these broad groups, these figures imply that rural-nonfarm workers receive lower wages than urban workers receive in the same occupations. Differences between urban and rural-nonfarm areas with respect to costs of living are not well documented, but it is very doubtful that they could be great enough to offset the wage advantage of the urban over the rural-nonfarm worker in the same occupation.

The 1940 census also provided more detailed information concerning the nature of the specific occupations that were most prevalent in rural areas, and from these more detailed occupational and industrial classifications, it is clear that some nonfarm occupations and certain nonagricultural industries are relatively more important for rural-nonfarm workers than they are for urban workers (Table 43). If one remembers that 20 per cent of all workers engaged in nonfarm occupations were rural-nonfarm workers, and uses that fact as a standard for comparison, some striking contrasts and implications become apparent. Since rural-nonfarm workers constituted 55.9 per cent of all mine workers, while rural-farm workers constituted another 13.0 per cent, miners, who are one of the most completely unionized occupational groups in the entire economy, were thus a predominantly rural group, although unionization is considered to be primarily an urban phenomenon. Moreover, while they tend to be concentrated in certain states and in certain areas within those states, mining communities comprise a segment of rural life that is numerically important: in 1940 about one out of every twenty rural workers who were employed in nonfarm work was engaged in mining.

Of the occupational-industrial groups shown in Table 43, the other two in which rural workers constituted a majority were the lumber and furniture industries (68.5 per cent) and the cotton textile industries (51.2 per cent). While these industries are also somewhat localized, especially in the case of cotton mills, their workers tend to be less separate from the rest of the rural population than they are in the case of mining. If, in these two industries, both the operatives and the laborers are counted, the total number of rural workers employed in them comes to about 450,000, which is about 6 per cent less than the number of rural workers employed in mines.

Rural workers did not form a disproportionately large share of the operatives and laborers employed in food-processing and similar plants in the last week of March 1940 to which the census data relate. But these figures probably do not give a fair picture for the active season in the food-processing industries, since many rural plants operate fully only during summer and fall

TABLE 43

Distribution of Employed Workers by Rural-Urban Residence for Nonfarm Occupations and Industries Relatively Important in Rural-Nonfarm Areas, 1940

Occupation	Total		Urban		Rural-Nonfarm		Rural-Farm	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
All nonfarm occupations	36,932,459	100.0	27,376,884	74.1	7,451,373	20.2	2,104,202	5.7
Clergymen*	133,449	100.0	80,072	60.0	46,554	34.9	6,823	5.1
Teachers (including county agents)	1,030,001	100.0	598,689	58.1	281,469	27.3	149,843	14.6
Postmasters, and miscellaneous government officials*	198,377	100.0	128,627	64.8	55,501	28.0	14,249	7.2
Proprietors, managers, and officials (excluding eating and drinking places)	1,411,314	100.0	969,876	68.7	375,195	26.6	66,243	4.7
Operatives and kindred workers								
Mine operatives and laborers*	649,226	100.0	175,586	27.1	388,986	55.9	84,654	13.0
Food and kindred products	313,068	100.0	251,512	80.3	47,817	15.3	13,739	4.4
Cotton manufacturers	355,850	100.0	173,738	48.8	154,025	43.3	28,087	7.9
Lumber, furniture, and lumber products	174,498	100.0	110,412	63.3	45,403	26.0	18,683	10.7
Laborers, except farm and mine								
Food and kindred products*	133,945	100.0	93,788	70.0	29,068	21.7	11,089	8.3
Textiles, textile products, and apparel*	72,943	100.0	45,167	61.9	20,940	28.7	6,836	9.4
Lumber, furniture, and lumber products*	252,922	100.0	79,636	31.5	110,110	43.5	63,176	25.0

* Males only.

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Volume III, The Labor Force.

harvests, and are closed or operate below capacity during the early spring. Other specific industries that were important in certain rural areas were not sufficiently important nationally to warrant special tabulations.

In the nonmanufacturing occupations the rural-nonfarm population contributed somewhat higher than proportionate numbers of clergymen, postmasters and miscellaneous government officials, teachers (including county agents), and proprietors of retail trade establishments. In part, these occupations reflect the fact that many rural towns and villages function as trade-and-service centers for the farm population in surrounding areas. This was especially true in the case of the 1,225 completely rural counties that in 1940 included only 18.5 per cent of the rural-nonfarm population but about 28.3 per cent of the rural-farm population.

In summary, the rural-nonfarm population of the country as a whole was, with respect to its occupational and industrial composition, much more similar in 1940 to the urban population than it was to the rural-farm population. Nevertheless, there were distinguishing features in the types of employment that were available to rural-nonfarm workers, as was indicated particularly by such instances as their relatively high proportion in extractive industries, in the textile and lumber branches of manufacturing, and in certain occupations characteristic of trade and service centers.

Regional Differences in Occupations of Rural People

The most striking difference in the occupational patterns of the major regions of the country lies in the proportion of the workers employed in agriculture, which in 1940 ranged from only 4.6 per cent in the industrialized Northeast to 31.3 per cent in the South (Table 44). Regional differences in occupational structure cannot, however, be explained wholly in terms of differences in the proportions of the respective populations that live in cities, in rural-nonfarm areas, and on farms, for the general nature of the region's economy also to some degree affects the occupational pattern of each residence group.

It was the occupational distributions of workers living on farms in 1940 that showed the greatest similarity among the several major regions, except in the case of the Northeast. In all other regions from three fourths to four fifths of all workers living on farms were engaged in agriculture, and the remaining fourth or fifth was divided very similarly among the nonfarm occupational groups, with trade and service ranking first and manufacturing second. The occupational composition of its farm population reflects the highly urban character of the Northeast, where only three fifths of the employed farm-resident workers were engaged in farm work, while the remaining two fifths were engaged in nonfarm industries. Moreover, in each of the nonfarm occupational groups the percentage of rural-farm workers was about twice as high in the Northeast as in the other regions.

The occupational patterns of rural-nonfarm workers showed greater differences among the regions than did those of rural-farm workers. For instance, greater proportions of rural-nonfarm workers were employed in agriculture in the South and West than in the North. Agriculture, mining, and forestry and fishing accounted for about 19 per cent of all rural-nonfarm workers in the South and West, but for only about 10 per cent in the North. In the state of West Virginia, which in the regional grouping is included in the South, mining alone provided employment for 35 per cent of all rural-nonfarm workers and for 41 per cent of the male workers. In the same region, however, there were near-by states, such as North Carolina, in which the importance of mining was negligible. Corresponding percentages for Western states where mining is important were: 20 per cent in Nevada, 11 per cent in Utah, and 10 per cent in Wyoming. Thus, the implication is clear that the occupational structure of the rural-nonfarm population is greatly affected by the presence or absence in the area of mineral and other natural resources.

TABLE 44

Distribution of Employed Workers among Major Industry Groups, by Rural-Urban Residence, United States and Major Regions, 1940

Residence Group and Area	All Industries	Agriculture	Mining, Forestry, and Fishing	Construction	Manufacturing	Trade and Services	Professional and Government	Industry Not Reported
	Per Cent	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*	*Per Cent*
TOTAL								
United States	100.0	18.4	2.2	4.6	23.4	38.4	11.2	1.8
Northeast	100.0	4.6	2.0	4.7	32.4	41.8	12.2	2.3
North Central	100.0	19.4	1.2	4.2	25.1	37.7	10.6	1.8
South	100.0	31.3	3.1	4.6	15.9	33.7	9.9	1.5
West	100.0	15.5	3.1	5.8	15.5	44.5	13.8	1.8
URBAN								
United States	100.0	1.0	1.1	4.8	29.1	48.9	13.2	1.9
Northeast	100.0	.5	1.0	4.4	34.1	45.0	12.7	2.3
North Central	100.0	.7	.7	4.4	33.3	46.9	12.3	1.7
South	100.0	1.5	1.4	5.7	20.6	54.9	14.3	1.6
West	100.0	2.4	1.8	5.8	17.1	55.2	15.9	1.8
RURAL-NONFARM								
United States	100.0	7.4	7.2	6.8	24.1	38.5	13.7	2.3
Northeast	100.0	4.6	7.1	6.7	30.7	35.8	12.7	2.4
North Central	100.0	6.2	3.7	6.8	21.5	44.5	14.7	2.6
South	100.0	9.4	9.2	6.4	23.9	35.8	13.1	2.2
West	100.0	9.4	8.5	8.0	17.7	39.1	15.2	2.1
RURAL-FARM								
United States	100.0	77.8	1.4	2.1	6.1	8.1	3.2	1.3
Northeast	100.0	59.8	2.4	3.8	13.5	13.7	5.1	1.7
North Central	100.0	79.6	.9	1.7	5.0	7.9	3.4	1.5
South	100.0	79.9	1.4	2.0	5.6	7.2	2.8	1.1
West	100.0	75.5	1.2	2.5	6.1	9.7	4.1	1.3

Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, The Labor Force (Sample Statistics), Industrial Characteristics.

There are also pronounced regional differences in the proportions of rural-nonfarm workers engaged in manufacturing, with the industrial Northeast, where 31 per cent are so engaged, leading, and the West, with only 18 per cent, being the lowest. In fact, in this respect the regions rank, with one exception, in the same order as they do with respect to the proportion of urban workers engaged in manufacturing. The exception is the South, which takes a higher place because a higher proportion of its rural-nonfarm workers than of its urban workers are engaged in manufacturing. This curious situation is a result of numerous cotton mills having been built in rural areas along the Piedmont fall line from Virginia to Alabama in order to take advantage of the water power that could be developed, the nearness to raw materials, and the presence of an abundant labor supply. Somewhat later, rayon, hosiery, and other apparel mills were also established in the same area and frequently in the same dispersed pattern. The importance of the textile mills in the Southern Piedmont area as sources of employment for rural-nonfarm workers is most clearly revealed when an examination is made on a county or area basis. But even in a state that is as large and diverse as North Carolina, and that has little manufacturing in many of its counties, textile-manufacturing industries accounted for the employment of one fifth of all the male workers and two fifths of all the female workers in rural-nonfarm areas. In other parts of the South, but to a lesser extent, the presence of small manufacturing establishments in rural towns and villages is common, while for the region as a whole the lumber, lumber products, and furniture industries are of considerable importance. In fact, in 1940 nearly one fourth of all Southern rural-nonfarm workers were employed in manufacturing establishments.

The most important industry group for rural-nonfarm workers in every region was trade and services (excluding professional and government services). The proportion of rural-nonfarm workers in this category was highest (44 per cent) in the North Central states, for it is in the Midwest that the type of rural village which serves primarily as an agricultural trade-and-service center most vitally affects the occupational composition of the rural-nonfarm population. For example, 41 per cent of all the rural-nonfarm population in the West North Central states lived in counties that were entirely without urban centers. The corresponding proportion for the South Atlantic states (23 per cent) was somewhat smaller, but the greater preponderance of manufacturing in rural areas led to a smaller proportion of the workers being engaged in trade-and-service center functions. Certainly both of these situations contrast sharply with that existing in the industrialized and urban Middle Atlantic states, where only 1.4 per cent of the rural-nonfarm population lived in wholly rural counties and many of the rural-nonfarm workers were employed in urban centers. Although the proportion of rural-nonfarm workers engaged in trade and service was the same in the Northeast as in the South, the clientele of the trade-and-service establishments that employed rural-nonfarm residents in the Northeast included a much smaller proportion of farm people.

From the information presented in this chapter, there seems to be a clear trend whereby differences in the occupational patterns of rural and urban workers are diminishing, and all likely future developments point to a continuation of this trend. There is no doubt, in any event, that further developments in mechanization and more efficient use of manpower in agriculture will tend to lessen the proportion of rural workers engaged in agriculture, which constitutes the outstanding occupational difference between the two groups. Simultaneously, the development of better highways, of new types of automobiles, and of airplanes and helicopters will certainly make possible an increase in the number of urban-employed workers who live in rural areas. Moreover, recent and prospective advances in rural electrification mean that many of the conveniences associated with urban life are becoming increasingly available in rural areas, thereby reducing the disadvantages formerly associated with rural life. The relatively high level of the birth rate in recent years will undoubtedly have some effect by causing more urban workers to move to the country so that their children can be brought up in less crowded conditions. And while no data are available on the possible effect that fear of atomic warfare may have by influencing people to prefer living in the open country, the testimony on this subject in relation to location of industrial plants that was given by a leading sociologist to a Congressional committee was reported in a New York weekly under the headline "Scatter, Scatter, Scatter!"

CHAPTER 15

LANDOWNERS AND TENANTS

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER
AND CARL C. TAYLOR

Characteristics and Distribution of Farm Families by Type of Tenure

FARM-OPERATOR families may be divided broadly according to type of tenure into two groups: landowners, or those who own the land they use; and farm tenants, or those who use land they do not own. The matter of tenure, or the relation of farm families to the land they use, is important to both the family and the community. The landowner group is further divided into full owners, who own all the land they use, and part owners, who own some land and lease additional land. There are about five times as many full owners as there are part owners.

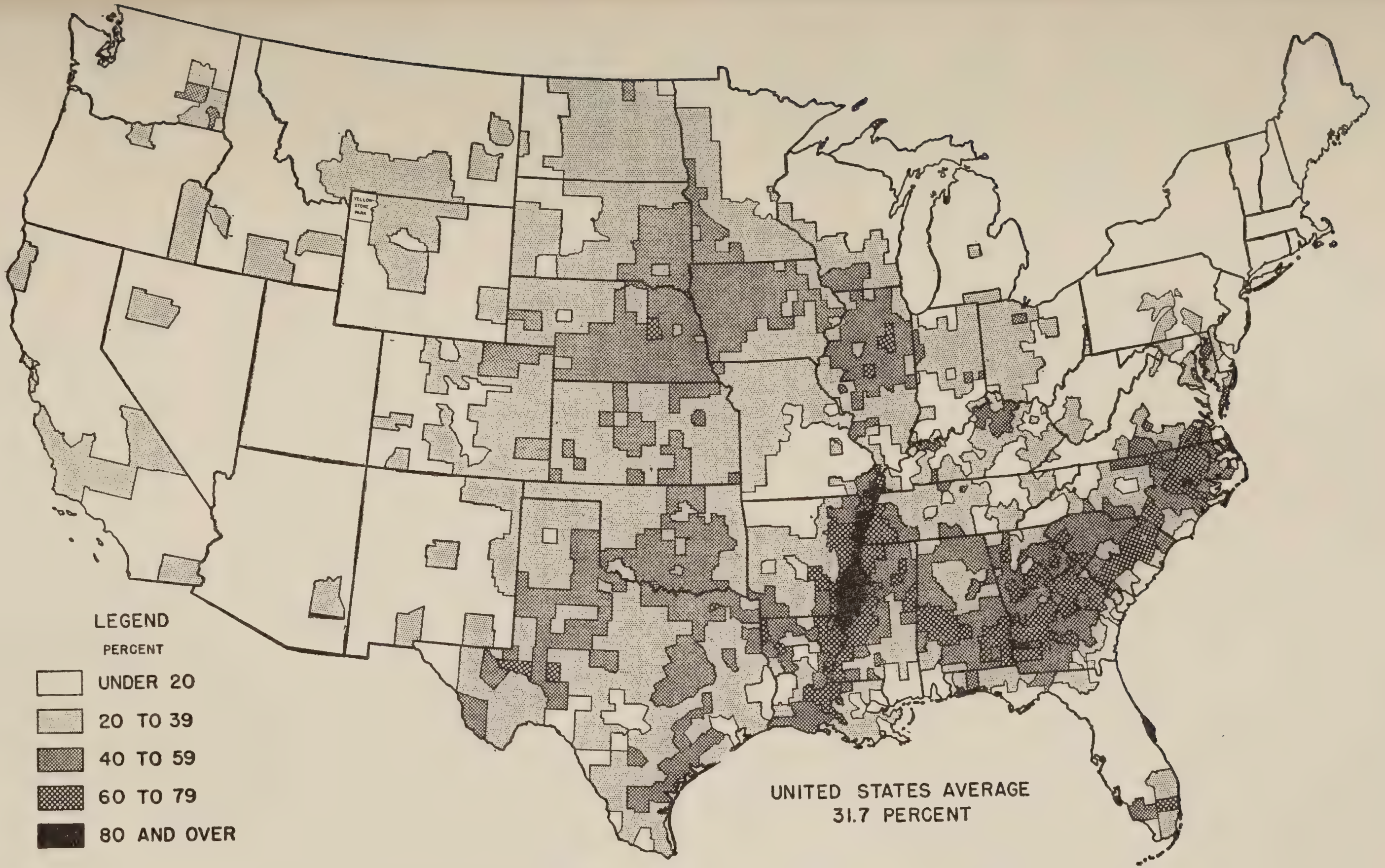
The proportion of farm operators who own their land varies greatly throughout the country, being highest in New England, in the area immediately around the Great Lakes, and in the Far Western states, and lowest in the South, in the Middle West, and in the Plains states. The farm tenancy rates are just the reverse.[1]

The farm-tenant group is divided by the Census Bureau into four major types of tenancy: cash tenancy, share tenancy, share-cash tenancy, and sharecropping. The character of the first three is suggested by the names they bear, which indicate the method of paying rent: a fixed amount of cash; an agreed share of the products from the farm, or a combination of cash rent and a share of the farm products. In each type the tenant has full use of the land for an agreed period of time, which usually is at least one crop year and often two years or more. The tenant himself arranges the finances of production and the disposal of his crops.

Sharecropping, although classified by the Census Bureau as a form of tenancy, is essentially working for wages, for the crops belong to the landowner. The cropper is locally spoken of as working on "halves" with his landlord. While the cropper does the work, the landlord provides the farm tools and horsepower, finances the farming operations (including advances for food and clothing), supervises the cropper's work, and sells the crop. Half of the crop then belongs to the landowner as payment for rent, and the

---

[1] See map (Fig. 24).


YELLOW-STONE PARK
LEGEND
PERCENT
☐ UNDER 20
▨ 20 TO 39
▨ 40 TO 59
▨ 60 TO 79
■ 80 AND OVER
UNITED STATES AVERAGE
31.7 PERCENT

Source: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce

Fig. 24 PERCENTAGE OF ALL FARMS OPERATED BY TENANTS, JAN. 1, 1945

(COUNTY UNIT BASIS)

other half theoretically belongs to the cropper as payment for his work. But in the Southern states, where croppers are most common, the cropper has no claim, in common practice or in law, to any part of the crop until the rent is paid and the borrowings he made in order to produce the crop have been fully settled. Thus, although the cropper is legally only a wage worker without control over the crop, he shares the risk of production and therefore occupies a position different from that of the wage worker. In those areas where sharecropping prevails, the other types of tenancy often take on some of the qualities of sharecropping. This is especially true in the South, where share tenants are supervised almost as closely as croppers. On the other hand, in those areas where sharecropping is less common, the occasional cropper is seldom so dependent or so closely supervised.

Cash renting, which is the most independent type of tenancy, generally prevails in those parts of the country where the highest proportion of farm operators own their own land, namely New England, portions of the Middle Atlantic states, the Great Lakes cutover, and the Far West. Share-cash and share renting, which are the next most independent types of tenancy, are dominant in the areas that rank next with respect to proportion of farm owners, and in the high-tenancy areas of the western part of the corn belt as well as in the wheat areas of the Great Plains, where farms are large and prosperous enough to provide a good living for both owners and tenants. Sharecropping, which is the most dependent type of tenancy, is concentrated in the Old South, where the smallest proportion of farmers are owners. In Mississippi, for instance, where in 1945 only one third of all farmers were owners, over three fourths of all tenants were sharecroppers; and in the Yazoo-Delta counties of Mississippi, where only one fifth of all farmers owned their land, more than four fifths of all tenants were sharecroppers.

The type of tenancy that prevails in a given area bears a striking relationship to the proportion of tenants who are relatives of their landlords. Thus, cash tenancy and share-cash tenancy are most common where the highest proportion of tenants are related to their landlords, whereas share tenancy and sharecropping, the most dependent types of tenancy, are most prevalent where the smallest proportion of tenants are related to their landlords. Moreover, the levels of living of farm owners and tenants are more nearly equal wherever cash and share-cash tenancy are most common, and wherever the highest proportions of the tenants are related to their landlords. Conversely, the differences in levels of living are greatest where relatively few tenants are related to their landlords and where share tenancy and sharecropping are most common.

The racial identity of farmers is also an important factor in farm tenancy. Except for the American Indians, most of whom live on government reservations, tenancy rates are higher among nonwhite farmers than among white farmers. Before the war about seven tenths of the Chinese and Japanese farm operators on the West Coast were tenants. Nearly three fourths of the Southern Negro farmers are tenants, and over half of these are sharecroppers. Tenancy rates among white farmers are highest in the Great Plains states from Texas to South Dakota, and in Illinois and Iowa.

The age of farmers is another significant factor in farm tenancy, with more younger farmers than older ones as tenants. There are two reasons for this situation: it often takes many years for a non-landowning farmer to accumulate enough to own a farm; and a son, or son-in-law, who inherits the family farm has often farmed it for many years as a tenant. The movement toward farm ownership as the farmer gets older has long been referred to as the "agricultural ladder," whose main rungs, from bottom to top, are: hired farm worker, tenant, and owner-operator. The ladder is most readily climbed, although not always rapidly, where a high proportion of the tenants are related to their landlords and where independent tenancy prevails; and it is least readily climbed where there are few family ties between tenants and landlords, and where large farms, seasonal hired workers, and dependent tenancy are most common.

Taking the country as a whole, the farms of full owners are smaller than those of the tenants (including croppers); in 1945 the averages were 125 acres for full owners and 135 acres for tenants. There is, however, a great deal of variety within the two classifications, for the sizes of farms of full owners range from the few acres of the Appalachian and Ozark mountain farms and of the part-time farms near the cities to the 160-acre farms of the Middle West and the large wheat and livestock farms of the Plains states and the Far West. The average tenant farm ranges from 43 acres among Southern croppers to over 200 acres for wheat farmers of the Plains states, and to 400 acres for the livestock farmers of the Rocky Mountains.

In order to emphasize some of the more marked differences that exist in farm tenancy in different parts of the country, the tenant-operated farms in the East *North* Central states (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin) will be compared with those of the East *South* Central states (Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky). The value of the East North Central farms and their buildings and equipment is higher when the operators are tenants than when they are full owners; tenants also possess tractors and automobiles more frequently than do full owners. By contrast, tenants in the East South Central states stand far below the full owners in these matters, while the full owners themselves rank below those in the East North Central area. Further comparing tenancy in the two areas, the East South Central tenant farms average less than half the size of those in the East North Central states; the farms are only one fifth as valuable, the farm buildings one sixth, and the farm implements one seventh as valuable; and only one fifth as many have automobiles, and one twenty-fifth as many have tractors. The two areas also exhibit great differences with respect to the formal education of the tenant farmers, their outside contacts through reading and travel, and their participation in community affairs.

In 1940 the average value of land and buildings was higher for tenant-operated than for owner-operated farms in all parts of the country except the South, where the average value of owner-operated farms was the lowest in the country. Although tenant farms in the North and West are larger and more mechanized, and the value of their products per farm averaged more than that of the products of full-owner farms in these regions, the full-owner families here, as in the South, live in better houses and have more household conveniences. Owning a farm seems to encourage a family to add such home conveniences as electric lights, radios, refrigerators, telephones, running water, and bath equipment. Differences between owners and tenants are least in the North and West, where the farm owners have the best dwellings and the most home conveniences, and greatest in the South, where the average owner dwelling more often needs major repairs, and home conveniences are rarer.

Travelers frequenting the rural parts of this country can often pick out the home-owned farms, outside of the South, not by the size of the house or the amount of farm machinery, but by the general appearance of the farmstead, the flowers and shrubs in the yard, the paint on the house, the fixtures at the windows, the condition of the fences and gates, and the erectness of the mailbox by the road. The owners know they will benefit by any improvements they make. Tenants, on the other hand, tend to get as much as they can out of the land each year, since they have no proprietary interest in it or any assurance that they will remain more than a year or two on a particular farm. Occasionally tenants do live on the same farms for several decades, and take a real interest in the farmsteads, the land, and the community. This occurs most often among the more independent tenants, especially those who are related to their landlords, and least often among the more dependent tenants, who move from one farm to another. In 1940 four fifths of the farm owners had been living on their farms five years or more, whereas only two fifths of the tenants (excluding croppers) and about one fourth of the croppers had a similar record. Moreover, studies of numerous localities indicate that farm owners, as compared with tenants, generally take a more active interest in community affairs, soil conservation, farmer co-operatives, and the maintenance of local schools and churches. Indeed, family living and community participation have given farm ownership a distinctive place in the rural life of the United States.

Long-time Promotion of Home Ownership of Farms

Throughout our nation's history it has been generally believed that agriculture and democratic institutions flourish when the land is owned in family-sized units by those who till it. Practically all the national leaders do homage in their public utterances to the home-owned farm for producing food and fiber, conserving the land, maintaining rural communities, and rearing children. This long-time, widespread appreciation has resulted in numerous concrete measures designed to promote interest in the home-owned farm. Thomas Jefferson and his followers championed the farm owners as the backbone of the young democracy, and in 1841 the national Congress enacted the Pre-emption Act, while in the early 1860's the Homestead Laws facilitated the settlement of the West in family-sized units. The federal government has retained title to the fifth of the nation's land area that consists of forests, ranges, and arid areas least readily susceptible to subdivision into family-sized farming units.

18. A farmer grinding a tool in his machine shop
[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

19. Bean pickers at work
[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

20. Farm migrants on the move

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

21. Submarginal farm near Newport, Washington

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Rothstein]

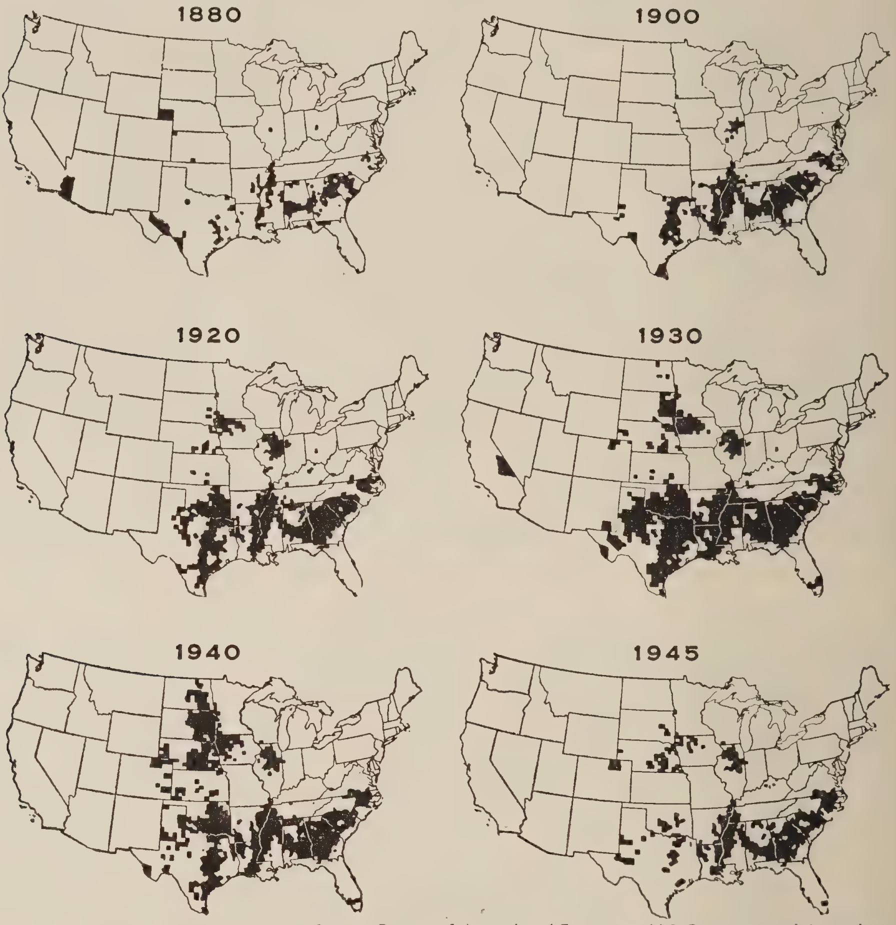
Other measures that have promoted home-ownership farms include: the early establishment of free roads, with recent Federal support for roads from farms to markets; the creation and maintenance of the public-school system, and, especially, the Federal provision for teaching agriculture in land-grant colleges; rural-free-delivery mail service, and, later, parcel post. Moreover, since its establishment in 1902 the Bureau of Reclamation has had prepared for cultivation four and a half million acres of irrigable farm land. Nearly all of this land was initially taken up in family-sized farms, with 160 irrigated acres being the largest amount any one farmer was allowed to occupy.

More recently, governmental activities of the Federal Land Bank, the Farm Credit Administration, the Farm Security Administration (now the Farmers Home Administration), and the Rural Electrification Administration have been closely related to the promotion of home ownership of farms and of farm-tenure improvements. The Agricultural Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and other Federal and state agencies have also demonstrated by their programs their high esteem for the family-sized, home-owned farm.

The Trend Away from Home-Owned, Family-Sized Farms

Although much has been done over the years to safeguard the ownership of the land for those who live on it, farm families have found it increasingly difficult to become owners of the land they cultivate. The proportion of farm families who own the land they work declined from 74 per cent in 1880 (when the census first reported the tenure of farm operators) to 58 per cent in 1930. Except for New England and a few Middle Atlantic states, which have the lowest tenancy rates, all parts of the country showed marked increases in the amount of tenancy until 1930. The South, which in 1880 had a tenancy rate of 36 per cent (the highest of any region), had a rate of 55 per cent in 1930. But the greatest relative increases in farm tenancy occurred in those most potent agricultural states of Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas, where tenancy rates rose from 20 per cent to 40 per cent during the fifty-year period between 1880 and 1930, and in the Western states which increased from 14 to 21 per cent.

In 1945 the farm-tenancy rate for the nation as a whole and for each of the major geographic regions was considerably lower than it was in 1930. This reduction of the tenancy rate was due to a 13 per cent increase in the number of owner-operated farms and a 29 per cent decrease in the number of tenant-operated farms during the fifteen-year period. Many tenants left farms to take urban employment during the prosperous World War II period. How many may later return is not known. Tenants also left farms during the depression years of the 1930's. This movement was especially marked in the South, where cotton acreages were being reduced. Moreover, because of the small size of many farm units, mechanized production has been accompanied by much displacement of croppers and other tenants who were shifted from the farm-operator group to the farm-wage group. In fact, between 1930 and 1945 the number of Southern croppers was nearly halved, while tenants other than croppers decreased by one fourth and owners increased by one fifth. The net decrease of 323,000 farms in the South represented more than three fourths of the total national decrease of 412,000 farms during that period.



1880

1900

1920

1930

1940

1945

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 25 COUNTIES IN WHICH AT LEAST HALF THE FARMS WERE OPERATED BY TENANTS, 1880, 1900, 1920, 1930, 1940, and 1945

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.

The decrease in the farm-tenancy rate which has taken place in the nation in recent years, and especially in the South, should be seen, then, as the result of several factors. During the depression of the 1930's, tenants were removed from the farm-operator group to the farm-wage group as a result of increased mechanization and the decrease of cotton acreage, and during the prosperous war period, low-income farmers were attracted into industry. In the general recent prosperity, the number of farm owners has been increased from two sources: farm operators purchasing the land they worked; and rural-nonfarm workers commuting to urban employment, but being counted as farmers by the census if they owned three acres or more of land, or produced farm products valued at more than $250 during the prosperous year of 1944. In short, the decrease of tenancy from 42 per cent in 1930 to 32 per cent in 1945 does not represent nearly so great a gain in home ownership of farms as the figures would suggest.

Despite the recent shifts toward lower tenancy rates, the general trend has been in the opposite direction.[2] Note how from 1880 to 1930, from one period to the next, the black area in the Southeast expands in all directions; how the Mississippi Delta becomes solid black and grows a little larger; how the scattered black areas in Texas in 1880 develop by 1930 into a great horseshoe covering east and west Texas and nearly all of Oklahoma. By 1945 the western portions of the cotton country had lightened up greatly as the number of tenants decreased in response to the increased mechanization of cotton production. There is also some lessening of the black areas in the Delta and the Southeast. But it will be observed that what in 1880 is a small splotch in central Illinois is a considerable area in 1920, and it remains so; and that the scattered black areas centering around western Iowa, which appear first in the 1900 map, have by 1930 engulfed about half of that great agricultural state as well as most of the eastern half of South Dakota and much of eastern Nebraska, with some counties in Iowa and Minnesota becoming lighter by 1940 while more become black in North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado. The majority of the counties, however, are no longer black in the 1945 map.

Another measure of tenancy is the proportion of the land that is operated by nonowners. Counties in which half or more of all the farmlands are operated by nonowners have shown a marked increase.[3] Between 1910 and 1940 the concentration of such counties has shifted from the Southeast to the western corn belt and the northern Great Plains, while their number more than doubled during the period. Between 1940 and 1945 there was a great decrease in such counties, with the remaining black ones being concentrated in Illinois and the Great Plains.

An over-all measure of the tenure status of all farm-operator families is the equity that they have in the total value of the land and buildings of their farms. Such equity decreased from 56 per cent in 1890 to 43 per cent in 1940. This decrease was accompanied by an increase in tenancy, and on owner-operated farms by an upward trend in the ratio of debt to value of farms. In 1940 the farmers in the corn belt, the Great Plains, and scattered sections of the cotton South had less than 30 per cent equity in the farms they operated.[4] For not only is the farm tenancy rate higher in many of the best land areas but the ratio of mortgage debt to value of owner-operated farms is also higher than it is in other parts of the country.[5] And by contrast, the operators in the poorer farming areas, such as the Appalachian and

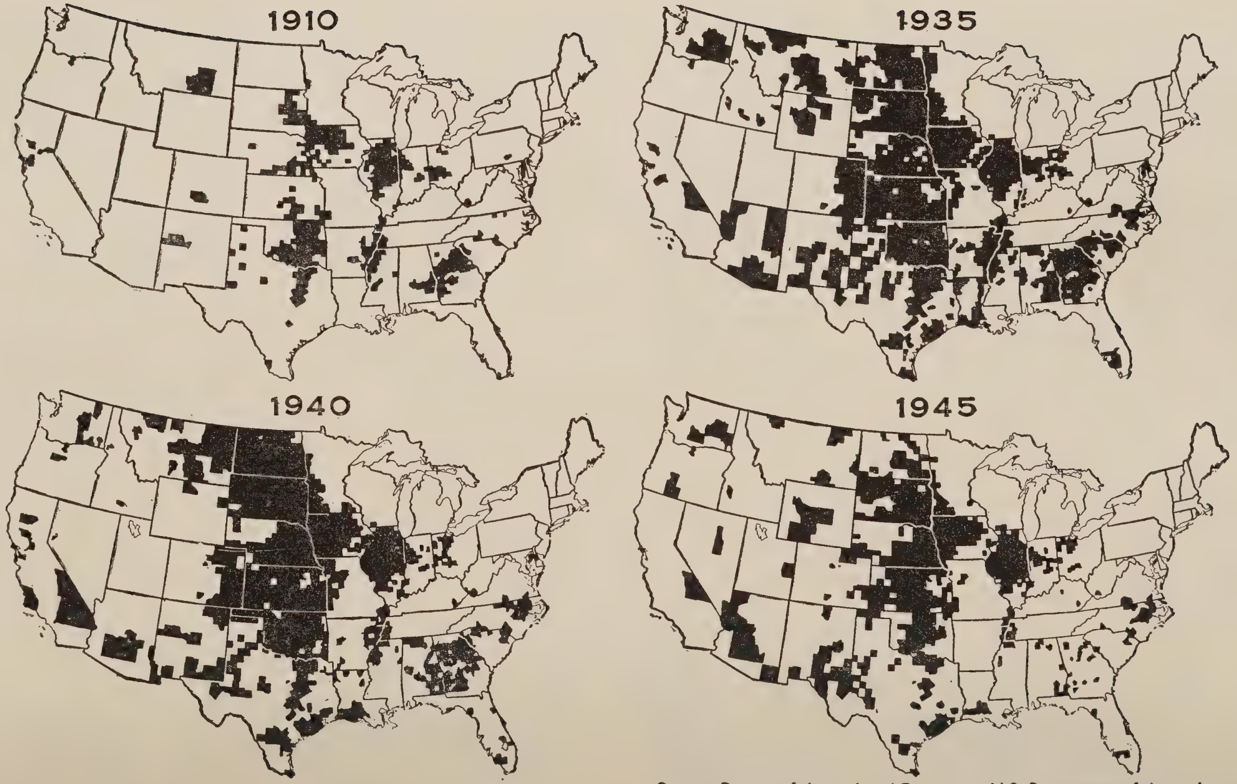
---

[2] See the six maps (Fig. 25), which show in black the counties where half or more of all the farms were operated by tenants from 1880 to 1945.

[3] See maps (Fig. 26).

[4] See map (Fig. 27).

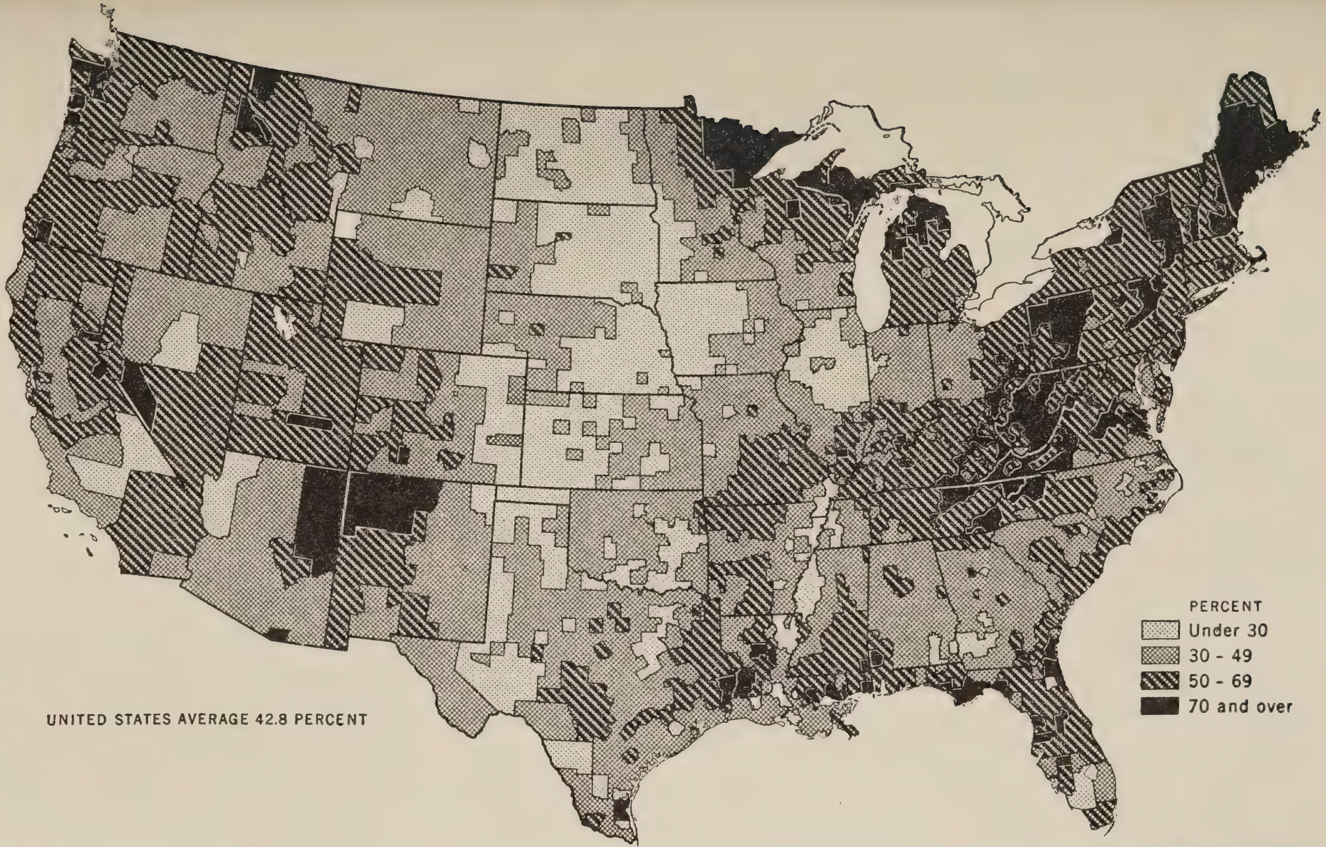
[5] Compare Figs. 25 and 27 (pages 270 and 273).



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 26 COUNTIES IN WHICH AT LEAST HALF OF THE LAND IN FARMS WAS UNDER LEASE TO THE OPERATOR, 1910, 1935, 1940, and 1945

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.


UNITED STATES AVERAGE 42.8 PERCENT
PERCENT
▨ Under 30
▨ 30 - 49
▨ 50 - 69
■ 70 and over

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 27 EQUITY OF OPERATORS IN FARM REAL ESTATE, 1940

Ozark highlands, the Great Lakes cutover, and the Western mountain areas, have high equities in the farms they operate. Money lenders are generally reluctant to accept these lands as security, while the relatively high servicing costs of small loans render them unattractive. Moreover, it is significant that in 1940 less than one fourth of the nation's total farm land was operated by mortgage-free owners, and that mortgage-free farms averaged one fifth less in acreage and one third less in value than those that were mortgaged. It was in the Middle Western and Plains states, where farms are most productive, that full owners had the smallest proportionate equity.

Having a small equity in their farms, the owner-operators in the best farming sections become tenants by losing their farms to creditors in periods of low prices.[6] The depression of the 1930's demonstrated how slight was the hold that many farmers actually had on the land to which they held deeds. Thousands of farms were foreclosed by lending agencies. By 1938 a half dozen of the largest life-insurance companies had acquired over 60,000 farms, chiefly in the best farming areas of the Middle West and Northern Plains. Moreover, nearly 4,000 multiple-farm owners owned a total of over 100,000 farms aggregating over 20,000,000 acres. More than three fifths of these farms were owned by 111 insurance companies, one fifth by 170 banks, and nearly one fifth by 3,491 other large landholders. Over nine tenths of these multiple-owned farms were held by 124 owners with 100 or more farms each. Indeed, over three fourths of the total were held by 40 owners with 500 or more farms each. Two years later 21 life-insurance companies held 57,633 farms, with over half of them being owned by five companies.

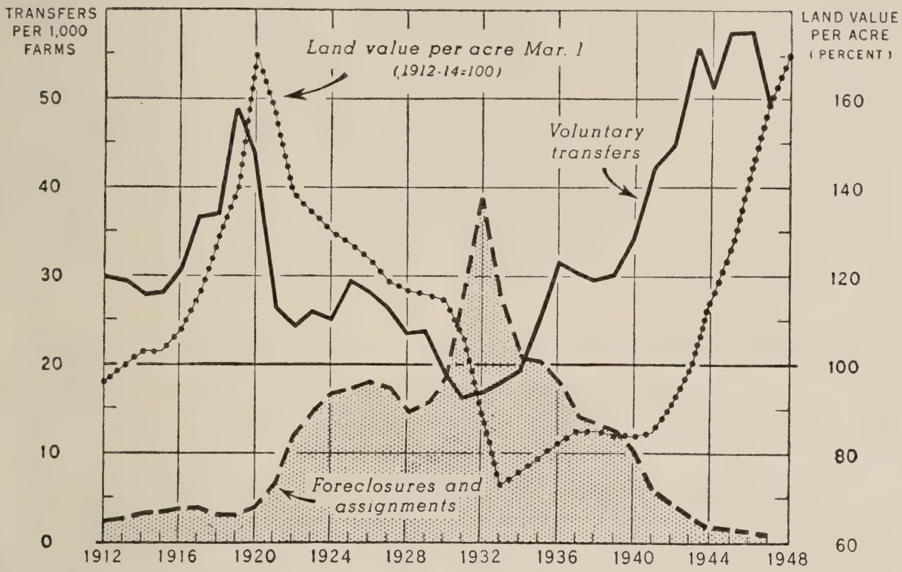
Between 1940 and 1945, corporations disposed of most of the farms they had acquired through foreclosures; the mortgaged indebtedness of farmers declined about one fifth, while the total value of farm real estate increased by one half. At the same time, however, large-scale farmers were expanding and mechanizing their operations; many city dwellers were buying farms; and although farmers were owning an increasing proportion of their farms, the percentage of decline in mortgage debt was not so great during the prosperous five-year period as the percentage of increase in real-estate values. It is likely, therefore, that a sharp decline in land prices would again be followed by widespread foreclosures by those holding mortages on farm lands.

Another measure of the uncertain status of the owner-operator farmer lies in the continuing concentration of agricultural production. While 15 per cent of all farm products in 1929 were produced by the 1.4 per cent of the nation's farms that were its largest, in 1944 only 0.4 per cent of the nation's farms produced 12 per cent of all farm products. The concentrations of large-scale farm operations have been greater in the lower South, the Far West and the Northeast than in the North Central states. And greater concentrations occur in the production of sugar cane, rice, vegetables, fruits, cattle, sheep, wheat, and cotton, than in the production of corn, hogs, poultry, or dairy products.

Large-scale production and greater specialization are leading the farming enterprise in a direction that is farther and farther away from the family-sized, home-owned farm. In the Connecticut Valley, for instance, the landowner may now contract with packers to grow and sell stipulated amounts of tobacco and onions, while sugar beets, sugar cane, and fruits and vegetables in other areas are often grown in a similar fashion by small owner-operators. Moreover, in some of the most highly specialized agricultural areas, the owner of the land already occupies a distinctly secondary place to that of the grower-shipper, who specializes in financing the production of fresh or canned fruits and vegetables, and in marketing them in carload lots. Since production and marketing are the most important considerations, the land itself is but one of the means to the end. This development is most marked in the more recently irrigated areas in the West, such as Imperial Valley and the upper reaches of San Joaquin Valley in California. The large operators, concentrating on a single farm product, shift from one tract of land to another in accordance with the dictates of the local system of crop rotation. Specialized production rather than the ownership of any particular tract of land thus becomes the basis of farming operations. And while the family-sized farmer can make a living here, the big grower-shippers can take the fullest advantage of farm machinery, or soil and crop experts, of seasonal labor, and of markets.

---

[6] See chart (Fig. 28).



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 28 VOLUME OF FORECLOSURES AND ASSIGNMENTS, VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS, AND INDEX NUMBERS OF VALUE PER ACRE OF FARM REAL ESTATE, UNITED STATES, 1912–48

This placing of greater emphasis by the farmers upon production and marketing than upon the land itself is more obvious in the prosperous farming areas. For it is a trend allied to the increase of farm tenancy in the Middle West and the Great Plains, to the decreased equity held in their farms by owner-operators, and to the greater reliance put upon machinery, production finance, expert management, seasonal labor, and the other more immediate means of production. Thus, as the mechanization and commercialization of farming have expanded, the relative value placed upon ownership of the land itself has declined.

The further expansion of commercialized farming in such areas as the irrigated sections of the Far West has produced several changes: greater specialization, more rotation of farm operators, the enlargement of farming units, and the decline of organized rural life as erstwhile resident operators move off the land. Although many of the largest grower-shippers prefer to rent land, a few of the very largest ones have bought large enough acreages to carry on the established crop rotation within their own holdings.

What further changes will the increasing mechanization of farming bring about? What, especially, will be its effect on the cotton South, which has long been characterized by the least mechanized, least specialized, and smallest farms in the nation, as well as by the placement by the farmers themselves of the greatest value upon the ownership of land?

The Social and Economic Backgrounds of Farm-Tenure Problems

Throughout the nation's history family-sized farm owners have suffered frequent reverses. A brief review, then, of the obstacles they have encountered, including those already mentioned, may prove enlightening.

Pioneer families, from the earliest times of settlement to the latest, found that land had been granted to explorers, colonizers, court favorites, or to transportation or educational organizations; or that speculators arriving ahead of them could legally extract a price from them. About three fourths of the public domain of over a billion acres was auctioned off with no limit on purchases, while much of the fourth that was disposed of through homestead entries had fallen into the hands of land speculators who had preempted the claims before the bona fide settlers arrived. Thus, much of the land that from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast was open to settlement was never free land; rather, it had a price which, then as now, was in relation to the market demand for it.

In addition, land has been held since the earliest days of white settlement as private property in fee simple absolute, which has been accompanied by equal inheritance for all heirs and by easy mortgaging and easy sale of land. This custom arose from the distaste on the part of the settlers for the feudal systems of European land tenure from which they were fleeing. Now, however, when a farmer dies without a will each heir inherits his proportionate share of the land. Since many heirs are no longer farmers, the early legislation designed to safeguard the holding of land by owner-operators often results in increased tenancy on absentee-owned farms.

Another obstacle to home-owned farms was the emergence of plantation farming. First the tobacco plantations of Virginia, then the rice and indigo plantations along the South Atlantic, and later the increasingly numerous cotton plantations throughout the South were the antithesis of family-sized, home-owned farms. Furthermore, the use of Negro slaves and, later, of Negro wage hands and croppers injected racial differentials into the picture, making home ownership almost impossible for Negroes, and very difficult for the competing lower-income white families.

The long-time imbalance that has existed between the urban and the rural economy presents another obstacle to family-sized farm ownership. This imbalance emerged after the Civil War, although its roots clearly go back to Alexander Hamilton's time. Put briefly, the situation is that the price the farmer receives for his product is low in relation to the outlay required for his supplies. The relatively greater wealth in the cities has doubly handicapped the home ownership of family-sized farms, for in prosperous times urban money is invested in farms, thereby frequently upping the prices of farms to a level farther above their long-time earning capacity than the farmers themselves would raise them. In hard times urban mortgage holders often take over farm lands at figures below their long-range earning power.

The recurring periods of economic prosperity and depression have also undermined the stability of farm ownership. It is during prosperous times that nonowning families first accumulate enough money for a down payment on land, but, bargained for at inflated prices, much of it is lost to creditors when land values drop below the amount still owed. A further hazard has been the custom of equal annual payments on the purchase price of a farm. For after two or more successive bad years, new purchasers have usually found it difficult to meet their annual payments. Also, most purchasers have attempted to pay for their farms in too short a time. As a result of unsuccessful attempts at landownership, foreclosures have been numerous and family savings have often been wiped out. Certainly such was the experience of many a family as the percentage of tenancy rose from 25 in 1880 to 42 in 1930. Families who thus lose their farms feel they have been taken advantage of by demanding creditors, or that they have been tricked by fate.

Still another hindrance to farm ownership has been the high cost of production credit, particularly in the Southern states, where farm-tenancy rates are highest. Most farmers produce their cotton with borrowed money — money borrowed at interest rates as high as 20 to 40 per cent. In recent years, however, farmers who depend on production credit have been helped considerably by the Production Credit Association and the Farmers Home Administration.

And lastly, farm ownership is impeded by the fact that most small farmers, both owners and tenants, look upon themselves primarily as employers rather than as either workers or consumers. They hire a little labor each year — sometimes more than they can afford — and usually at low wages; many would like to be larger operators, and therefore cherish their infrequent role of employer; and they resent what they consider the high cash wages of industrial workers. Thus the small farmers join the large commercial farmers and the industrialists in trying to keep down the wages of workers. Needless to say, low incomes for working families retard the home ownership of farms, first by limiting their savings, and second by maintaining a supply of cheap labor, which encourages the operation of large, highly commercial farms that rely on low-paid seasonal workers. If the small farmers, instead of seeing themselves primarily as employers, regarded themselves as either workers or consumers — and they are in reality both — they would perhaps be more interested in raising wages for workers and in increasing the number of home-owning farmers.

The effect of the prosperous war period upon home-ownership of family-sized farms is not yet clear, for although the recent trend is toward fewer tenants and more owner-operators, the total number of farm operators is declining. Moreover, the debt ratio of owner-operators has not decreased at a pace commensurate with the increase in the value of farm real estate. And while some of the tenants who were drawn away from the farms during the war period may return later, some families listed as new owner-operators are really not farmers, but off-farm workers who reside on small tracts of land within commuting distance of their work. Then, too, the increase in mechanization that has occurred in recent years has increased the farmers' dependence on cash incomes for defraying operating expenses. In short, the uncertainties of the farm-tenure situation in the United States at this time of great general prosperity underscore the long-time need for improvement of tenure conditions.

Programs for Tenure Improvement Here and Abroad

During the past thirty years or so, there has been increasing recognition of the problems of farm tenure in the United States. Research has been conducted in colleges and universities, private agencies, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Some of the needs that have been pointed out and the recommendations that have been made, together with the steps that have been taken as a result, are here briefly summarized.

Through the National Farm Loan Act of 1916, which set up the Federal Land Bank, Congress attempted to help farmers purchase and improve their farms. By 1946 the Bank had made four and a half billion dollars available through low-interest loans to farmers who wanted to purchase or improve their farms or refinance burdensome mortgages. To lessen the credit problem still further, the Farm Credit Administration has since 1930 extended short-term low-interest loans totaling over five and a half billion dollars.

In 1937 the report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy summarized the research and recommendations on farm tenancy completed up to that time. The report pointed out that farm ownership had declined during the preceding half century, and that the security of a farm family on a tract of land should be the aim of tenure improvement. It had been found that the greatest insecurity among farm people occurred among tenants (especially croppers), farm laborers, families on submarginal land, and among young farm people who were unable to obtain farms of their own; and that this insecurity arose from economic maladjustment, defective land and credit policies, the consequences of fee-simple ownership, and credit disabilities. The results of insecurity were soil erosion and human erosion, as indicated particularly by the constant moving and the low level of living of many tenant families, and by the low incomes of many landowners in the poorer farming areas. The report recommended that: (1) the federal government purchase and sell land through a low-interest, long-term loan to farm tenant families; (2) that prospective purchasers be carefully selected, placed on adequate family-sized farms, and supervised in order to assure their ability to pay for the land; (3) that the federal government and the states co-operate in the program; and (4) that rural education and health services be improved.

The Bankhead-Jones Tenant Purchase legislation of 1937 was one result of the report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy. Another was the Rural Rehabilitation program of the Farm Security Administration (now the Farmers Home Administration), which by 1946 had made loans to over a million low-income farmers in order to increase their production of home-grown foods and to raise their level of living through the more effective use of their land resources and of their own labor. By 1947 the Tenant Purchase program, administered by the Farmers Home Administration, had made loans totaling about a quarter of a billion dollars to over 46,000 tenants to enable them to purchase farms. This program's losses to date (late 1947) have been negligible — a minute fraction of one per cent. In fact, the purchasers are well ahead of schedule in their payments, and under the variable payment plan of the agency they are afforded considerable protection against future hard times. The work of the Tenant Purchase program has advanced beyond the experimental stage, and could be widely extended.

Semipublic agencies, too, are concerned with the improvement of the land-tenure situation. Of especial importance are the Regional Land Tenure Commissions in the Southwest, the corn belt, and the Southeast. These are composed of representatives of the state land-grant colleges, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Farm Foundation and other interested private agencies.

Throughout the history of this country private groups have also tried to promote home ownership. Most of these efforts, which are usually small and often rather Utopian in character, have for one reason or another proven unsuccessful. On the other hand, some religious groups, including the Mormons, the Mennonites, and in some localities the Catholics, have encouraged and sometimes assisted their members to become owner-operators.

Programs to improve land tenure have been undertaken in most of the countries of Europe, as well as in Egypt, New Zealand, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, Japan, and other places. Many of these efforts antedate those in the United States. For the concentration of land ownership abroad has in general been more widespread than here, and in many countries land-tenure conditions have been more intolerable. In England, Scotland, and Wales the land-tenure improvement efforts were well under way a half century ago, with the programs there being directed primarily toward improving the status of tenants by affording them freedom of management, the right to arbitrate rents, and, upon leaving a farm, compensation for unused improvements. In Denmark and Ireland the programs to increase ownership of land by family-sized farmers were started about three quarters of a century ago. Then tenancy rates were very high; now well over nine tenths of all the farms are owner-operated, mostly by small holders. Loans bearing a low rate of interest and amortized slowly have made farm purchases possible. Co-operatives have assisted in financing the purchase of farms in these two countries, and have undertaken educational and marketing activities. After World War I similar co-operatives became widespread wherever the landed estates of central Europe were being divided into freeholdings.

Another method of changing tenure conditions has consisted in the expropriation by the central government of landed estates, which were subsequently developed into collective or other communal farms, or divided into small holdings. Russia and Mexico offer examples of the use of this expropriation method.

Still other broad types of important changes in tenure have been effected. There have been programs to consolidate parcels of land, as in France and Spain, where the three-field system of farming by freeholders became widely established following the breakdown of the manorial system over a century ago. There has been, as in Germany, legal recognition of semipublic land-settlement agencies in order to increase the number of owner-operators and to enlarge the holdings of small owners. There have been efforts, as in New Zealand, to improve tenure through the utilization of a graduated land tax that favors the small owner-operator. And recently interest has been expressed, especially in the British Empire and in Puerto Rico, in the nationalization of land. Also recently the Japanese Diet has enacted legislation providing for the purchase by the government of absentee-owned farm lands and of most of the acreage of the larger resident landowners. According to present laws this land is to be resold at low interest and with slow amortization to the tenants who occupy it. Variable annual payments are to be permitted in order to safeguard the new owners from loss of their farms because of crop failures. It is now estimated that this program will transform upward of a million farm tenants into farm owners.

These efforts made to reform land tenure abroad show that the growing interest in farm tenure in the United States, as evidenced by the creation of the Federal Land Bank and of the Farm Credit Administration, and by the Bankhead-Jones Tenant Purchase programs, are national expressions of a more or less world-wide movement. So far, the land-tenure improvement programs in the United States have been relatively limited and conservative, perhaps primarily because the country is relatively young, and because until just a few decades ago land-hungry people here could readily find cheap land by moving to the frontier.

CHAPTER 16

FARM LABORERS

BY LOUIS J. DUCOFF

The Agricultural Working Force in the United States

AGRICULTURE is the largest single industry in this country, with farms and ranches occupying three fifths of all the land area in continental United States, and providing employment for about one seventh of the nation's total labor force. During an average week of the year about 8,300,000 persons fourteen years of age and over are engaged in farm work as their sole or major occupation. They include farm operators, unpaid members of their families, and hired farm workers. During the various seasons of a year, however, many more people work on farms than the annual average figure would indicate, since many workers are used for very short periods at cultivating or harvest time. Altogether a total of fourteen or fifteen million individuals, including children and part-time workers, do some farm work each year.

This huge agricultural working force differs in many ways from the working force of most other industries in the United States. At any given time of the year over half of all farm workers are self-employed, whereas the great majority of workers in most other industries are employees of individuals or companies. The balance of farm workers is divided almost equally between hired laborers and unpaid members of farm operators' families. In no other major industry does this large a fraction (approximately one fifth) of the working force consist of unpaid family members, nor this small a fraction consist of wage or salary workers. This means that the great majority of the self-employed farm operators spend most of their time doing the same sort of work that is done by those classified as laborers, whether paid or unpaid, although the operators, of course, also exercise managerial functions. The expression "dirt farmer" designates those farmers who actually do much of their own labor, in contrast with other farmers (and they are relatively few in number), who either have some additional source of income, and can therefore hire people to work for them, or whose enterprises are so large that they may engage only in the managerial functions.

The fact that nearly four fifths of all agricultural workers are farm operators and members of their families is a result of the predominant organization of farms in the United States as family enterprises. But despite the prevalence of family-sized farms, the scale of operations among farms varies widely, and there is a great degree of concentration of production on only a small proportion of the farms. Thus in 1944 half of the country's farms produced only 10 per cent of the total value of products sold or consumed by farm households, while the upper tenth of the farms produced nearly half of all agricultural products.

Certain other characteristics distinguish agricultural employment. Much of it is wholly seasonal in nature. Since half of all agricultural workers are concentrated in the sixteen Southern states, conditions peculiar to the South greatly affect the average conditions of agricultural employment for the whole country. The fact that wage workers form a minority in the total agricultural employment picture means that unemployment is much less common among agricultural workers. On the other hand, many operators and unpaid workers on the very small farms experience much underemployment, particularly during depression periods, since their farms are not sufficiently large or diversified to provide year-round employment. A further unique feature of American agriculture as a major industry is that for the great majority of agricultural workers the place of residence and the place of employment are the same because of the almost universal identification of the home with the farm.

The seasonal nature of agriculture has important effects on the character of farm work. Most farms require much higher input of labor in the cultivating and harvesting periods than in midwinter. However, in special crop areas of California, Texas, and Florida the harvest of winter vegetables and fruits leads to high labor requirements in the winter months. To supply the additional seasonal labor needed in most areas, farmers themselves work longer hours and are helped by members of their families. In different types of farming areas, the work done by the farmer's wife and children varies; during wartime, women, children, and old persons did much more seasonal farm work than before the war, and frequently did types of work, such as driving tractors, previously done only by adult men.

The seasonal labor demands of agriculture are so great that about one half of the farms in the United States require additional labor. For about two thirds of the farmers who hire some labor during the year, however, the total amount hired is very limited, varying from the equivalent of three man-months to the equivalent of only a few days or weeks. Such farms, together with those that do not use hired labor at all, make up five sixths of the nation's farms. In 1945 and 1946 the one sixth of the country's farms that used over three man-months of hired labor during the year accounted for over 90 per cent of all hired farm-labor time. Other chapters in this book will treat more fully the work of operators – owners, tenants, and sharecroppers – and of the members of their families on farms employing little or no hired labor. The rest of this chapter will deal mainly with hired farm workers and the farms on which they are employed.

Composition of the Hired Farm Working Force

The total number of individuals who did some hired farm work during recent years was just over four million (Table 45). This total includes children, who are not usually included in the labor force, and other groups, such as imported foreign workers and prisoners of war, which were a feature of the wartime farm-working force. More detailed information is available on the three million of these workers who were 14 years old and over and not in the armed forces or inmates of institutions at the end of the year. Three fourths of these three million workers were male, a half-million of whom, in 1947, were veterans of World War II.

TABLE 45

Composition of the Hired Farm Working Force in 1945 and 1947

Type of worker	1945 *Thousands*	1947 *Thousands*
Total different individuals	4,219	4,064
Workers 14 years old and over in civilian noninstitutional population at end of year	3,219	3,394
Males	2,375	2,587
Veterans of World War II	157	498
Nonveterans	2,218	2,089
Females	837	807
All other workers *	1,000	670

* Includes the following groups of persons who did any farm wage work during the year, but who were not covered in the survey: children under 14 years of age, imported foreign workers, persons who died or entered the armed forces during the year, certain groups of migratory workers not covered in the survey, persons in institutions and, in 1945 only, prisoners of war.

Source: *The Hired Farm Working Force of 1947*, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C., July 1948.

Over 90 per cent of the farm operators and unpaid family workers in agriculture live, as well as work, on farms. Among the hired farm workers the proportion is smaller but still a majority: in recent years approximately 70 per cent of all farm wage workers lived on farms the year round. Another 20 per cent, although not on farms, were living in rural areas. Thus, most hired farm laborers, living and working in rural areas relatively widely dispersed, are generally isolated from association with other groups of workers, both agricultural and industrial. This is an important factor in explaining the very small degree of unionization among hired farm workers.

Farm wage workers are usually younger than industrial wage workers. In 1945 one fifth of all the farm wage workers were between 14 and 18 years of age, and only 8 per cent of the nonagricultural wage workers in midsummer of 1945 were under 18. Half of the male farm workers were 35 and under, and the median age of female hired farm workers was 26. The median age of nonagricultural wage-and-salary workers in July 1945 was 42 for males and 31 for females. These figures show the effects, of course, of agricultural deferment policies during the war, whereby a larger proportion of males of military age were retained in the hired farm-working force than in the industrial worker group. But this special circumstance does not account entirely for the significant difference that exists and has interesting ramifications. The difference between the median age of male hired farm workers and nonagricultural wage workers has not changed significantly several years after the ending of World War II.

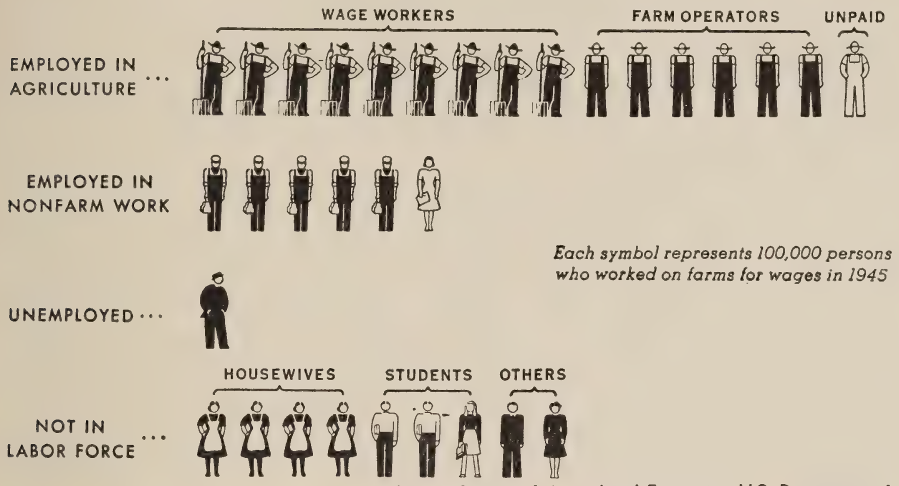
In the earlier days of American agriculture many a farm-reared youth hired out to a neighboring farmer for several years in the hope of accumulating sufficient savings to buy work stock and equipment, so that he could rent a farm and become a farm operator. This was considered one of the rungs on the agricultural ladder that eventually led to mortgage-free ownership of a farm. In more recent times, however, most of the young hired farm workers have not achieved such progress up the ladder. The preponderance of young people in an occupation that offers so little economic advancement thus represents something of an anomaly. The fact that the wages of hired farm workers are generally low (see page 287) implies that few young people reared on farms deliberately choose the occupation of hired farm worker as a life's vocation. For many, although not for all, working for wages on farms no doubt represents only a temporary sort of occupational attachment until they can move to urban areas and take nonfarm jobs.

With little bargaining strength and not enough of the incentive of achieving good pay after long experience, as in most other trades, hired farm workers are a disadvantaged group in our economy. Consequently, the needs for *seasonal* hired labor are met largely by diverse types of workers, including individuals disadvantaged in occupational skills, education, or mobility, or discriminated against by some industrial employers because of race or nationality. The diverse occupational composition in January 1946 of more than three million persons who had been hired farm workers during 1945.[1] Less than a third of them were still employed then at hired farm work. The next largest group was composed of low-income farm operators and members of their families who had worked part of the year on their own farms and part of the year as hired workers on other farms. Another large group had found off-season winter employment in nonfarm jobs — in manufacturing, domestic service, and trade. Only a small proportion of the 1945 hired farm workers were unemployed and looking for work in January 1946. But nearly a third of them had withdrawn from the labor market in wintertime, being neither gainfully employed nor looking for work. Included in this group were 400,000 housewives, 300,000 youths in school, and over 200,000 others, most of whom were older persons.

Popular thinking and writing have featured two sorts of hired farm laborers: the migratory laborer who follows the crops, and the traditional hired hand who has steady employment on one farm. The latter, if he is married, often lives in a house provided by the farmer. If he is single, and not working in the South, he often lives in the farmer's house. While the migratory laborer and the regular hired hand certainly form part of the hired farm-working force, in 1945 each type represented but a small proportion of

[1] See chart (Fig. 29).

all farm wage workers. Who, then, were the rest of the three million farm wage workers in that year? They were the small farmers, the sharecroppers, the members of farm families who worked for wages on other farms, the paid members of farm operators' families, the local school youths and housewives who worked on farms for a few weeks or months in summer, the people from near-by towns who worked most of the year in nonfarm jobs. In short, farm laborers do not constitute one single distinct class; they overlap with low-income farm operators – especially in the case of Southern sharecroppers – and with nonagricultural wage workers, particularly those living in rural areas. It is interesting to note that since about 70 per cent of the hired farm workers in 1945 were farm residents, their wages, although an expense to the employing farmers, were a source of income to other people living on farms.



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 29 WHAT 3,200,000 PERSONS WHO WORKED ON FARMS FOR WAGES IN 1945 WERE DOING IN JANUARY, 1946

The Farms That Hire Farm Laborers

Some notions commonly held concerning the prevalence of hired men on farms are scarcely justified by the actual situation in the United States. Many people think that the "typical" American farmer hires at least one year-round man in addition to extra seasonal labor. Actually, in recent years only one farm in eleven employed as much as the equivalent of one full year of hired labor, and only one in thirty employed as much as the equivalent of two laborers throughout the year. Only about one per cent of the country's farmers in 1945 conducted large-scale operations involving five or more man-years of hired labor. Thus, most farmers are not employers, but since the small fraction who are important employers are more articulate, their views on labor and wages have widespread currency among smaller farmers.

The net incomes of farms hiring any considerable amount of labor are much higher than the average income for all farms. This fact is often overlooked in interpreting such problems as comparisons of the relative income position of different groups of farmers, the wage-paying ability of agricultural employers, and the general connection between changes in farm wage levels and in farm incomes. For comparisons of income of hired workers and that of their employers it is particularly inappropriate to use the average income for *all* farms. Among farmers whose products in 1939 totaled $4,000 or over in value, 85 per cent used hired labor. Averages for this group therefore reflect mainly the economic position of employing farmers. In that year hired laborers on these farms averaged only one sixth (about $500) of the average net income (about $3,100) for a man-year of farm work by their employers. Of the total value of products, hired labor accounted for about one sixth, other production expenses accounted for about one half, and the operator's net return for his labor, capital, and management constituted one third. The criterion of the farmer's ability to pay has often been used in considering what hired labor's share of farm income should be, but if the figures used refer to all farms rather than just to hiring farms, the conclusion will be incorrect. For example, if the all-farm averages for 1939 had been used, the net returns per man-year of operator and family labor would be reduced to one sixth (from $3,091 to $517), while the wage income per man-year of hired labor would go down only to approximately three fifths (from $521 to $329).

Large-scale farmers in the United States pay higher average wages to their hired workers than do the farmers who employ less labor. Farmers who employed two or more man-years of labor during 1945 paid an average hourly wage of 41 cents to their regular workers, and 60 cents to their seasonal workers in September of that year. Farmers who employed less than one full year of hired labor during the year paid 31 cents and 40 cents respectively. This same general relationship held in each region except in the case of seasonal workers in the North Central states. Moreover, farmers employing larger numbers of workers require fewer hours of work per week from their regular hands than do farmers with fewer workers, and they also provide somewhat longer work-weeks for their seasonal workers. In September 1945, regular workers on farms with four or more hired workers averaged 58 hours weekly, while those on farms with one to three hired workers averaged 63 hours weekly. On the other hand, seasonal workers averaged 36 hours on the larger farms, and only 33 on the smaller ones.

Wage Rates and Earnings of Hired Farm Workers

The wages of farm laborers have traditionally been low as compared with the wages of nonagricultural workers. Even in the relatively prosperous years of 1925–9, the farm wage rate averaged between $1.50 and $1.60 a day without board, and this rate dropped to half during the depression years of

1932–4. During the recovery period, both farm and nonfarm rates rose slowly. Farm wage rates increased more rapidly during the early part of World War II, but by the middle of 1942 the average daily rate without board was only $2.45. This amount was but half the average entrance rate for common labor in industry at that time. Even in 1946, after all the increases that had occurred during the course of World War II, the wages of hired farm workers in the United States were considerably lower than those of nonfarm wage workers. For the country as a whole the average daily cash wage for all hired farm workers was $4.40 in July 1946.

TABLE 46

Comparisons of Wages per Man-year of Work for Industrial and Agricultural Workers, United States, Five-year Averages, 1910–39, Annual 1940–47

Period	Industrial Workers *	Hired Farm Workers †			Farm Wages as Percentage of Industrial Wages
		Total	Cash	Value of Perquisites §	
	Dollars	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	*Per Cent*
Annual:					
1947 ‡	2,501	1,247	1,071	176	49.9
1946	2,244	1,181	1,002	179	52.6
1945	2,254	1,085	920	165	48.1
1944	2,324	981	830	151	42.2
1943	2,176	835	697	138	38.4
1942	1,848	640	527	113	34.6
1941	1,495	489	398	91	32.7
1940	1,273	397	317	80	31.2
Average:					
1935–39	1,149	362	282	80	31.5
1930–34	1,038	287	209	78	27.6
1925–29	1,316	433	323	110	32.9
1920–24	1,275	450	332	118	35.3
1915–19	877	394	281	113	44.9
1910–14	583	271	190	81	46.5

* Includes factory, mining, and railroad employees; estimates based on Bureau of Labor Statistics and Interstate Commerce Commission data on average employment and pay rolls.

† Total farm wages divided by annual average hired farm employment.

§ Noncash compensation.

‡ Preliminary.

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

The annual earnings of farm laborers are, of course, vitally affected by the amount of work they obtain during a year as well as by the rates that are paid, but information on these annual earnings, allowing for periods of unemployment, is not available. Still, as shown in Table 46, even farm laborers who have managed to be employed full time throughout the year have, since 1910, averaged annually less than half the wages of full-time industrial workers. The discrepancy was greatest during the depression years of 1930–4, when agricultural wages averaged only about 28 per cent of industrial wages. During World War II they rose to average from 35 to 48 per cent as controls were established on industrial but not on most agricultural wages. In 1947 total farm wages including noncash compensation averaged half of industrial wages per man-year of work.

These over-all averages indicate the low economic position of farm laborers as a group. Among hired farm laborers, however, the wages received by different groups show important variations, the most significant being those that exist among the various regions of the country. Farm wages are consistently highest in the West, especially in the Pacific states, lowest in the South (where about half of all farm workers are employed), and intermediate in the North. In May 1945, hourly cash farm wages averaged 67 cents in the West, 40 cents in the Northeast, 30 cents in the North Central, and only 27 cents in the South. Among male hired farm workers, two thirds were earning less than 40 cents an hour, and one fifth (mostly in the South) were earning less than 20 cents an hour. Only 8 per cent earned as much as 75 cents an hour.

Within a given region of the country, wages for farm work vary according to the type of work done, and according to whether the worker is regularly employed on one farm or is hired only for short periods of seasonal work. Short-time seasonal workers usually receive higher hourly earnings than do the regular hired men.[2] But this difference is reversed in the weekly average cash wages paid to regular and seasonal workers, since regular workers average more hours of labor on the employer's farm than seasonal workers. Moreover, regular workers usually receive without charge a higher value of perquisites (lodging, meals, farm products) than do seasonal workers. In May 1945, perquisites boosted the average cash wages of regular workers by 30 per cent, while for seasonal workers the addition to cash wages of the value of perquisites was only 10 per cent. Thus, if allowance is made for these noncash types of compensation, the seasonal worker's advantage in hourly earnings is reduced, and the regular worker's advantage in weekly and annual earnings is increased.

Migratory Farm Workers

During the short periods of cultivation or harvest certain types of specialized agriculture require much greater numbers of workers than are needed during the rest of the year. For American agriculture as a whole this seasonal labor force is usually supplied by local seasonal hired workers and by the unpaid members of the farmer's family. The migratory worker is a feature principally of those farms whose large-scale, specialized production has led to their being called "industrialized" farms.

The employment of migratory rather than local seasonal workers on such farms is the result of several factors. The number of workers required for the particular operations may be so large, and the periods of employment so short, that the local labor supply cannot fill the requirements. Moreover, the work is often so arduous, and the wage and living conditions of such an unattractive nature, that the locally resident population will not take on the jobs. It also happens that in certain areas the employers prefer migratory workers because the ethnic or socio-economic groups preponderant among those workers provide a more tractable labor supply than would local workers. It is migratory labor that cultivates and harvests much of the acreages in fruits and vegetables, as well as in such crops as cotton, sugar beets, and hops.

---

[2] See page 287.

On the supply side, various factors operate to affect the numbers of workers who, from want of better alternative employment opportunity, leave their regular residences and, with or without their families, seek work as migratory farm laborers. The great depression of the 1930's, the droughts in the Dust Bowl area, the displacement of farm workers through mechanization, all played vital roles in augmenting the supply of migrant farm workers during the decade before World War II. But then, with the war the manpower demands of the nation, affording ample opportunities for jobs of a more continuous nature and drawing men into the armed services, greatly reduced the number of migrant workers. In short, the supply of migratory workers varies according to the country's economic and employment conditions, and according to the technological and other circumstances in agriculture that displace workers. The high rate of natural increase among the rural population in many areas, without a corresponding increase in employment opportunities, also affects the supply of migratory labor.

By 1945 wartime employment conditions had reduced the number of migratory workers well below the prewar figures. About 600,000 migratory workers, including about 120,000 imported foreign laborers, were employed on farms at some time during 1945, and this group constituted approximately one seventh of that year's total hired farm-working force. The importance of migratory labor to agriculture, however, lies not so much in numbers as in its availability to growers when the demand for short-time seasonal labor is not met by local workers.

The composition of the migratory labor force is manifold. Minority race and nationality groups have always bulked large, and Mexicans, and United States citizens of Mexican descent, have long formed one of the most important migratory streams. In earlier decades immigrants fresh from Europe often turned to migratory farm jobs, and even today many families of recent European origin living in Northern cities go to the fields for the summer harvests. Along the West Coast Orientals have featured in the farm-labor picture, with Filipinos acquiring special skills and speed in specialized harvest operations. In more recent years large numbers of Southern Negroes have followed the harvests up the Atlantic seaboard and into special-crop areas of the Middle Atlantic states. Native-white citizens have also joined the migrant streams. In the 1930's, especially, hundreds of thousands of workers displaced from the Dust Bowl and the cotton belt trekked to California and competed with minority groups for the available farm jobs. In the Midwest and along the Atlantic seaboard, too, native-white citizens of long-settled ancestry have swelled the migrant labor streams. And from the self-sufficing farming areas of the Southern Appalachians, small-scale farm operators and their families frequently migrate north for summer field work, returning to their own farms in winter.

Because migratory farm workers usually supplement the local labor supply when the demand for workers is at a peak, they average higher wages than other farm workers. However, this over-all wage differential in favor of migratory workers does not mean that they are paid higher rates than local workers for the same types of jobs in the same area. The wage problems of migratory farm workers do not stem from discrimination against them, but rather from the generally low level of farm wages as compared with nonfarm wages and from the irregularity of their employment.

Little recent information is available on annual earnings of migratory farm workers, but studies of their income situation in prewar years revealed annual earnings too low to maintain even a barely adequate level of living. The situation improved during the war years and since, largely because supplementary nonfarm work has been more available during slack agricultural seasons. For all hired farm workers, migratory and local, who worked 250 days or more during 1945, the average cash wages earned were $914, with an average value of major perquisites of $194. Most migratory workers, however, did not work 250 days on farms during the year, and their perquisites averaged less in value than those of regular workers.

Migratory workers, along with other seasonal farm workers, are characterized by insufficient employment security, low annual earnings, deprivation of the protection afforded by social legislation regarding wage and hour standards, unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation, and old-age insurance. In addition, migrant farm workers experience special disadvantages in time lost from work while traveling to find employment, in the low standards of the housing and sanitary facilities that are available to them, and in the lack of educational, health, and other community services. Migratory workers usually do not meet residence requirements for public assistance or work relief in times of unemployment. The relatively high incidence among migratory workers of diseases associated with unsanitary conditions is significant.

Grower-Worker Relationships in Agriculture

Since most farms are relatively small-scale enterprises, a popular picture of typical agricultural employment has portrayed one regular hired hand working alongside his employer. In such circumstances the relationship between employer and wage hand would be more personalized that it is in large nonagricultural establishments. In this type of situation, in the Northern and Western parts of the country, the hired man may be provided room and board in the farm operator's house, and may even be given the social status of a member of the family.

The facts of the employment situation and grower-worker relationships in agriculture, however, present a different picture from the one described above, which represents a type that has often been featured, sometimes even romanticized. Actually, since it is the largest farms that hire most of the labor, the operators do not usually work side by side with their hired hands. And in the busy seasons of the year these large farms each employ quite a number of workers whom they often hire in gangs or crews. In September 1945 seven tenths of all hired workers were working on farms that employed four or more hired workers each, and nearly half of all the workers were employed in crews. Thus, for the majority of persons who do farm wage work, relations with their employers are as depersonalized as they are in nonagricultural industries, even though this is not the case for some fraction of the year-round hired workers, and for some workers who are related by blood or marriage to the farm operator.

In commercial production of fruits, vegetables, and certain special crops, which requires a great deal of additional labor at harvest time, the impersonal relationship between growers and workers has reached an extreme. Often a labor contractor acts as an intermediary agent, eliminating entirely direct contact between grower and worker. Yet in other respects the employment situation of such harvest labor differs enough from the employment situation in nonagricultural industries so that attempts at unionization have not usually, so far, been very successful. The short-time nature of most seasonal jobs results in a lack of continuity in the employer-worker relationship, and the casual nature of agricultural employment results in large changes in the personnel making up the hired working force. Another factor that has impeded unionization of agricultural workers is the geographic dispersion of farms, which makes it difficult or impossible for the workers actually to get together and organize as a group. Then too, obstacles not unique to agriculture, such as employer opposition to unionization, have been very important in preventing the growth of unions among hired farm workers. In spite of these difficulties, however, unionization of certain groups of agricultural workers has occurred in a number of areas.

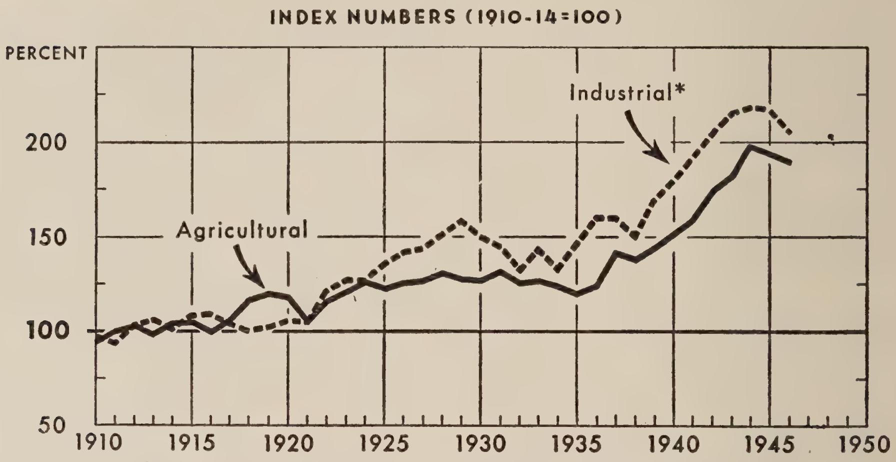
Since the vast majority of agricultural workers are unorganized, they are generally in a less favorable bargaining position with their actual or prospective employers than are industrial workers. On the other hand, large-scale growers are themselves usually organized into growers' associations, and frequently make formal or informal agreements with one another regarding the level of rates to be paid during a given season. Hired farm workers have not been in a position to exercise political pressure to secure the protective legislation that has been won by industrial workers. In some states conferences of social work, religious organizations, and other groups have pressed for protective legislation for farm workers, and in some states laws have been passed regarding minimum standards for housing and sanitation provided to migratory farm workers. But on the whole, the farm laborer, whether a local resident or a migratory worker, shares little of the benefits from the Federal and state social legislation that since 1933 has led to better employment conditions and increasing security for many industrial workers.[3]

---

[3] A minor exception is the provision embodied in the Sugar Act for payment of wages not less than a specified minimum to sugar-beet and sugar-cane workers.

Prospects for Hired Farm Workers

While agricultural employment has revealed a downward trend over the past four decades, agricultural production has shown a marked upward trend. The demand of an increasing population in the United States for more food and fiber was met chiefly through a higher volume of production per worker. The gain in productive efficiency of agricultural workers over this period is an impressive record. And in recent years the rate of gain has equaled that of workers in industry.[4] In 1947 agricultural production per worker was 45 per cent greater, on the average, than in 1935–9, and it was almost double the agricultural production per worker in 1910–14. As a result, although the number of farm workers has been reduced by 17 per cent, and the national population has increased by over one half, the food and fiber produced in 1947 was 70 per cent more than in 1910.



*MANUFACTURING AND MINING DATA FOR 1946 ARE TENTATIVE ESTIMATES

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 30 PRODUCTION PER WORKER: AGRICULTURAL, AND INDUSTRIAL, UNITED STATES, 1910–46

Underlying these gains in labor productivity is a record of progress in farm technology that includes, besides mechanization, improved varieties of crops and livestock; more effective control of plant-and animal diseases and pests; better conservation, cultural, and farm-management practices; and, in very recent years, fuller utilization of the available working force. But it is mechanization, as Dr. Sherman Johnson, assistant chief of the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, has stated, that is the most important single factor back of the increased output of farm products for human use.

Mechanization is proceeding rapidly in agriculture. Between 1940 and 1945 the number of tractors on farms increased by more than one half, even though production of farm machinery was somewhat restricted by wartime limitations of materials. In the next two years there was a further large increase in the number of tractors so that by January 1947 there were 2,800,000 tractors on farms compared with 1,567,000 in January 1945. Recently new types of machines have been perfected for important operations, such as cotton picking and sugar-beet and sugar-cane harvesting, and it is to be expected that the inventive capacity of a country as highly industrialized as the United States will develop more machines to perform operations now done by hand. These machines will displace labor and thus result in a further decline in the number of agricultural workers. Combined with a continuation of high levels of nonagricultural employment, the effect of this trend on agriculture and on the general economy will be wholesome, since it will mean the absorption of many farm people who are still trying to eke out a meager living from small and unproductive farms into more remunerative pursuits.

---

[4] See chart (Fig. 30).

While scientific and technological advances during the last three decades, together with greater diffusion of educational opportunities, have manifestly improved and enriched the level and content of living for the population at large, the rural population has not shared proportionately in these national gains, and hired farm laborers and their dependents have probably benefited the least. By whatever criteria the comparative position of farm laborers in the level of living is measured — whether in terms of standards of housing or health, of levels of education or income, or of participation in community affairs — the results of the comparison testify to the disadvantaged position of these people in our economy. Moreover, that traditional hope and incentive of the hired man, whereby in the years past he usually looked forward confidently to climbing the tenure ladder to reach the prize of farm ownership at the top, seems to have been impaired rather than improved with the increasing commercialization of agriculture.

Hired farm laborers today generally have a culturally inherited low status that has not been determined solely by low earnings. In the South the prototype of the sharecropper and the hired farm laborer was the slave laborer, whose status was infinitely lower than that of the contemporary hired farm worker in the North; and in the years before the Civil War the regional culture, markedly affected by slavery, carried over a disdain for those who did manual labor. The result was a very low status for white as well as for Negro farm laborers. In the North and West the introduction of industrialized operations into agriculture has affected the status of many seasonal farm workers, for the seasonal laborers hired in gangs on big commercial farms are almost completely segregated culturally from their farmer-employers, and their status is much below that of labor groups in nonagricultural industries.

Partly because the various efforts in the past to extend legislative protection to the wage and working conditions of farm laborers, or to extend to them the benefits of social insurance have not been successful, some students of farm labor problems have tended to view pessimistically the prospects for improvement of conditions of hired farm workers in the years ahead. Summing up the situation for seasonal farm workers, Dr. Harry Schwartz in a recent book on seasonal farm labor says:

> The problems of seasonal farm workers have been brought to the attention of the American people every few years at least since the turn of the twentieth century. Yet almost no formal steps to aid these workers have been taken. Periodic upswings of the business cycles have been relied upon to mitigate the worst evils. There seems no reason to expect a change in this situation in the discernible future. As in the past, therefore, the chief postwar hope for farm workers must rest on the maintenance of non-farm prosperity and of opportunities for escape from agricultural employment.

It is unquestionably true that the very real measure of improvement of wage and income conditions of hired farm laborers achieved in recent years was due to the prosperous conditions of the economy during World War II and the period since. Besides better wage and working conditions, farm laborers have had supplementary or alternative farm and nonfarm employment opportunities to a degree unknown in previous decades. Moreover, farmers have gained a greater measure of appreciation of the importance of satisfactory living and working conditions for their hired laborers and of good labor relations. These achievements hold out the hope that the great gap still existing between the earnings and living conditions of farm laborers and those of workers in other industries will be progressively narrowed. Also, the extension of old-age and survivors insurance, unemployment compensation, and other features of social insurance to farmers and hired farm workers is receiving support from ever-widening groups.

CHAPTER 17

LEVELS AND STANDARDS OF LIVING

BY EDGAR A. SCHULER AND WALTER C. McKAIN, Jr.

What Levels and Standards of Living Are

"Americans have the highest standard of living in the world." "It isn't possible for American labor to compete with cheap foreign labor because the foreigners have such a low standard of living." "Every American child should have at least thus and so as part of the American standard of living." These are all common sayings and beliefs in the United States. Newspapers, public speakers, popular magazines, and even such official documents as the Charter of the United Nations make frequent use of the term "standard of living," very often to express approval of the idea that living standards should be raised. And in one sense the term means all things to all people, therefore providing a basis for general agreement that would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in terms of the specific elements included. We must run the risk of a little disagreement, however, by distinguishing between "standards" of living, the term that is popularly used, and "levels" of living, a term that is rapidly gaining acceptance in technical writings as being roughly equivalent to the popular concept.

The basis for this distinction lies in the fact that how people live, what they have, the opportunities available to them, and the goods and services they use and consume, all constitute one type or class of phenomenon; while the values people attach to these things, goods, services, and opportunities constitute a very different type of phenomenon. We shall, therefore, refer to the possession of goods, services, and opportunities as the "level of living." And we shall refer to the valuations placed on these possessions, to the likes, dislikes, and desires regarding the various elements of the level of living, as the "standard of living." In short, what we *have* is our level of living; what we *want* is our standard of living.

It is apparent that levels and standards of living are intimately interrelated. For in a young and growing democratic society such as ours, which has fairly open, free movement from relatively modest positions in the social scale to those that are very high, people commonly aspire to better things than they have. Characteristically, their present levels of living are seldom completely satisfying, since their standards are higher than their actual needs. The gap between an individual's, family's, or group's level of living and standard of living is a measure, then, of their relative contentment.

In older, more stable, and less democratic societies, such as those of Europe and Asia, there is much less likelihood that the people's standards will be substantially different from their existing levels of living. Of course, when famine, flood, fire, war, or other disaster overtakes, the level of living in any country may drop to a point where survival itself is endangered, in which case the level of living falls below the standard of living.

Maladjustment also occurs when the level of living exceeds the standard of living. For instance, the discovery of oil in portions of Texas and Arkansas brought sudden riches to many farm families. Almost overnight they had more money than they could spend without exceeding their previous standards of living And the dissipation of wealth that followed displayed a lack of adjustment. A somewhat similar experience occurred among some Farm Security Administration borrowers. For home improvements and household conveniences acquired as one condition of the loan sometimes exceeded the family's standard of living. As one borrower in the Sun River Project said: "I want to stand on my own feet; I don't want someone coming out to tell me 'you ought to have $300 for living; so much for new furniture, so much for this and that' when I don't want it and couldn't pay for it."

Moreover, in societies, or portions of societies, that are beset by economic or political insecurity, people may develop desires for a type of living that represents a lower level in terms of number, quality, and variety of goods and services. This is sometimes expressed as the wish to return to "the good old days" or "the simple life," or to go "back to Nature," and so on. And it is illustrated by the popularity among dissatisfied urbanites of such a book as Kains' *Five Acres and Independence.*

In our society such conditions have been only temporary. Prolonged and serious social disorganization, insecurity, and danger, however, have probably always been accompanied by a shift in people's standards of living, whereby greater simplicity is desired in the hope that security and serenity may be achieved at the lower level. The depression of the 1930's gave us what may be our closest approximation to such a situation. The thought of adjustment to atomic warfare directed at ourselves likewise helps us to conceive of the possibility of such a regression.

But, in general, people in our society tend to have standards of living that are more or less beyond their levels, and to regard this as normal. "I want my children to have a good education, so they won't have to work as hard as I did," is one expression of this tendency. Before the war the same basic idea might have been expressed like this: "Let's get Dad to trade in the old bus on a new, next-year's model." The Russian journalist Ilya Ehrenburg comments that the Englishman "orders his suit of first quality material, expecting to wear it until he dies," whereas "the American likes only new clothes."

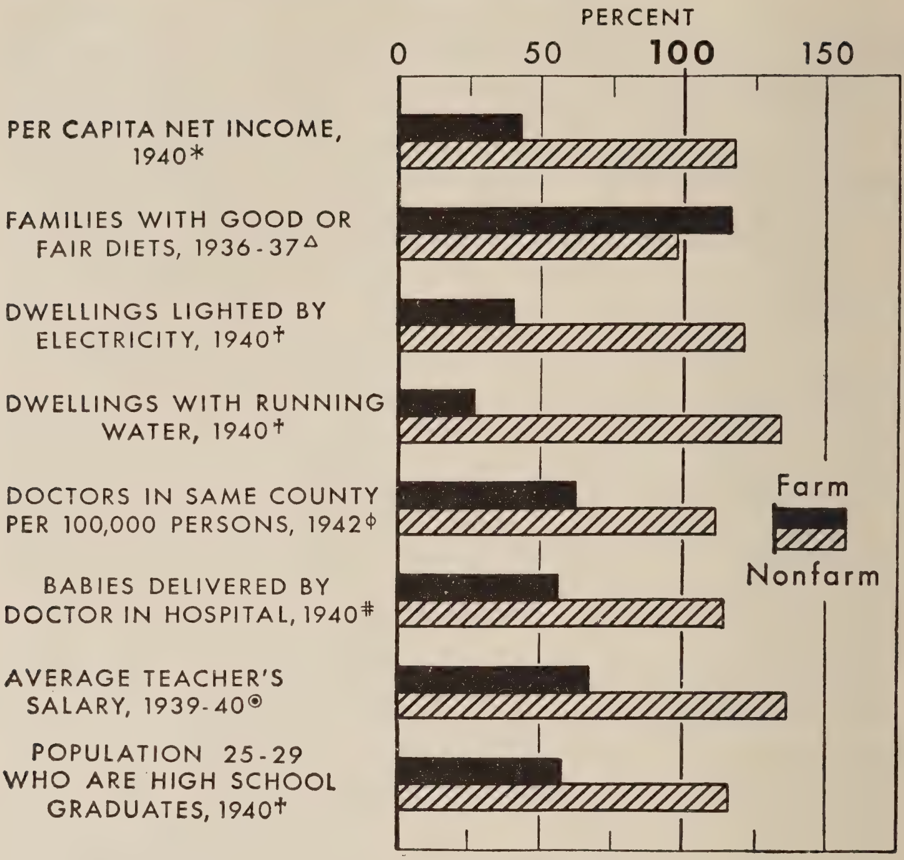
Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of "the American standard of living" is its implicit assumption of infinite perfectibility, of constantly expanding new horizons, of new frontiers to be explored and exploited, of new tastes and desires to be wooed and won into cash-in-the-register demand. It is, first of all, the philosophy of perpetual progress. But it also includes essentials, such as food, shelter, clothing, and medical care, which have genuine survival value, and which are among the "necessities of life" everywhere in the world. Thirdly, it includes the use of such conveniences as household furnishings, labor-saving devices, and equipment; the services of professional people other than doctors; the agencies of personal care; and services and facilities that reduce isolation, that is, reading matter, radios, telephones, automobiles, postal service, good highways, railroads, buses, and other types of public transportation and communication.

Then, too, it includes facilities, such as schools, hospitals, churches, and playgrounds, which meet the needs of groups larger than the family, and business establishments which serve an infinite variety of specialized needs. As a fifth classification, it includes the amount and distribution of time left for leisure, recreation, and self-improvement activities after the expenditure of such physical and mental effort as are required to supply the desired goods and services. And as a sixth, it comprises the basic values, freedoms, or beliefs by which people live, and for which, if need be, they are willing to die. For Americans these values are spelled out in such historic documents as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights and later amendments to the Constitution. Finally, it implies some degree of assurance that all these goods, services, and rights will continue to be enjoyed in spite of illness, adversity, or advancing age. In fact, security is valued so highly by many families that savings and the purchase of a home often claim a substantial share of the family income.

Typical studies of the level or standard of living, however, do not include such a broad range of topics as has been indicated above, which represents an attempt to include the full range of the American way of life. But emphasis on the fundamental uniformity of the pattern that prevails throughout American culture should not cause one to overlook the variations that exist within that pattern among regions, between socio-economic classes, and, broadly speaking, between rural and urban people.

Rural-Urban Differences in Levels and Standards of Living

Farm people have historically enjoyed such satisfactions as economic security, personal independence, a closely knit family life, and the pride of creation, of working with nature, and of playing an undeniably essential role in feeding and clothing the entire population. At the same time, urban people have in the past been more amply supplied with material possessions and services in the form of household conveniences, automobiles, hospitals, schools, theaters, and libraries. But improvements in transportation and communication, a generally rising educational level, and greater contacts of



* THE FARM INCOME SITUATION, JUNE-JULY 1947, U S DA, B A E
△ ARE WE WELL FED? U S DA, BUR. HUMAN NUTRITION AND HOME ECONOMICS
† BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, 1940
Φ ADAPTED FROM THE AMERICAN MEDICAL DIRECTORY, 1942 EDITION, A. M. A.
ADAPTED FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940. BUR. CENSUS
® STATISTICS OF STATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1939-40. U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 31 LEVEL-OF-LIVING ITEMS OF FARM AND NONFARM PEOPLE EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

all kinds between urban- and farm-dwellers have tended to modify these differences. Suburbanization and part-time farming are, in part, the reponse of urban people to the appeal of rural life. The summer homes of the wealthier city families, and the country boarding houses and day camps of the less wealthy, surely indicate the desire of city people to capture the delights of rural living. On the other hand, farm people are striving to attain advantages that have heretofore been restricted to the city. Thus, rural electrification has made great strides in recent years; rural public-health services have been expanded; and many county libraries have provided "bookmobile" services in rural areas. Moreover, paved roads and automobiles have brought urban services closer to rural homes, and more of the homes have been equipped with labor-saving conveniences. Nevertheless, there remain vast disparities between the level of living in rural areas and that in urban areas. In fact, farm people are disadvantaged with respect to almost all the level-of-living items for which there are adequate measures. It should be remembered, however, that averages frequently conceal significant variations, and that while the average farm family may rank below the average urban family with regard to a particular item, some farm families are better off than some urban families.[1]

Income is usually considered a good barometer of living conditions, for persons with high incomes can purchase many conveniences and services that are denied to people with low incomes. In one sense income is also an item in the level of living. For the prestige and status accorded in our society to persons with high incomes afford those fortunate individuals certain direct satisfactions. In respect to income, then, nonfarm people are better off than farm people. In 1946 the per capita net income of persons living on farms was $779, whereas it was $1288 for persons not living on farms. And in 1942 twice as many nonfarm persons as farm persons paid income taxes. It is estimated that in 1940 the buying power of nonfarm families exceeded that of farm families by more than a half.

As is shown in Table 47, the lower incomes of farm and other rural people are reflected in the amount and type of their expenditures for everyday living. Thus, farm families spent less for every major consumption item than urban families spent, and at the end of the year had not been able to save as much. Expenditures for food represented the largest item in the family budget for each of the three place-of-residence families. But it was the farm family that spent the largest percentage of income, nearly 40 per cent, for food, most of which was produced on the farm. Housing and household operation costs were much lower on farms than elsewhere, even when the "imputed value" of the farmer's home is included ("imputed value" refers to the practice whereby a farm owner is credited annually for housing expense, usually 9 per cent of the estimated value of the dwelling, although no out-of-pocket expense is incurred). On each of the other items, too, the farm family spent less than either the urban or rural-nonfarm family.

For every dollar the urban family had to spend or save in 1935–6, the average farm family had only 65 cents. When it is remembered that farm families are usually larger than city families, the contrast becomes even sharper. What this means in terms of the kind of clothing, housing, medical and dental services, recreation, and schools that rural people can afford is quite evident. And it is this type of differential that provides the leverage for programs of equalization of income or services through farm subsidies or parity programs, or through the provision of public assistance on the basis of need rather than on the basis of contribution to taxes.

But despite relatively low incomes, farm families had better diets in 1935–6 than nonfarm families. In a report entitled *Are We Well Fed?*, issued by the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of

---

[1] See chart (Fig. 31).

TABLE 47

*Average Disbursements per Family and Percentage of Income Spent for Specified Items by Farm, Rural-Nonfarm, and Urban Families, 1935–6 **

Category of Disbursement	Average Disbursements per Family			Percentage of Income		
	Farm Families	Rural-Nonfarm Families	Urban Families	Farm Families	Rural-Nonfarm Families	Urban Families
Current consumption:						
Food:						
Purchased	$ 187	$ 352	$ 492	15.4	25.0	26.5
Home produced	286	31	—	23.5	2.2	—
All food	473	383	492	38.9	27.2	26.5
Housing:						
Money expense	18	127	244	1.5	9.0	13.1
Imputed value	114	60	70	9.4	4.3	3.8
All housing	132	187	314	10.9	13.3	16.9
Household operation:						
Money expense	64	156	192	5.3	11.1	10.3
Imputed value of fuel and ice	29	—	—	2.4	—	—
All household operation	93	156	192	7.7	11.1	10.3
Furnishings	31	44	55	2.6	3.1	2.9
Clothing	103	123	162	8.4	8.8	8.7
Automobile	92	118	122	7.5	8.4	6.6
Other transportation	3	6	24	.3	.4	1.3
Medical care	47	59	72	3.9	4.2	3.9
Recreation	21	35	52	1.7	2.4	2.8
Personal care	16	26	34	1.3	1.8	1.8
Tobacco	15	23	31	1.2	1.6	1.7
Education	11	18	16	.9	1.3	.9
Reading	6	12	16	.5	9	.9
Other items	7	8	7	.6	.6	.4
All consumption items	1,050	1,198	1,589	86.4	85.1	85.6
Gifts	23	44	54	1.9	3.1	2.9
Personal taxes	3	11	36	.3	.8	2.0
Savings	139	156	176	11.4	11.0	9.5
All items	1,215	1,409	1,855	100.0	100.0	100.0

* "Family Expenditures in the United States, Statistical Tables and Appendixes," National Resources Planning Board, June 1941, p. 13. These figures represent a selection from those presented in Table 40. Footnotes are omitted.

Agriculture, it was shown that 50 per cent of the farm families and only 20 per cent of the families living in villages and cities had good diets. Living on a farm, however, does not insure an adequate diet. Indeed, in 1935–6 fully a fourth of the farm families had poor diets, and another fourth had only fair diets.

It is generally agreed that before the advent of modern medicine and

22. Farmer harrowing a field with team

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Hunton]

23. Mechanized farming: discing a field

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Osborne]

24. Mexican cotton pickers on a farm in Arkansas

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Hunton]

25. A skilled farm hand operating a single-row corn picker on Pennsylvania farm

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Forsythe]

health care, the rural population was healthier than the urban population. But the control of epidemics, the growth of preventive medicine, and the spread of hospital and medical services in urban areas have modified and possibly reversed the situation. Since measures of the health of rural and urban people are not available, direct comparisons cannot be drawn. Work has been done by E. A. Schuler and others, however, on the problem of measuring unmet needs for medical care in terms of serious symptoms and conditions that can be appraised by nonmedical investigators. And as research in this field is expanded, we may be able to evaluate the health of rural and urban people.

In any event, we already know that there are striking disparities between rural and urban places in the number of medical facilities. Certainly concern over the lack of doctors, nurses, dentists, and hospitals has been expressed by many rural leaders, while the Hill-Burton Hospital Facilities and Construction Act of 1946 was intended, among other things, to stimulate the construction of hospitals in rural areas. For in 1942 the rural population, in comparison with the urban population, had readily available only about half as many doctors, dentists, and hospital beds per hundred thousand persons. The most rural counties (that is, those over 75 per cent rural-farm) had less than a third as many doctors, less than a fifth as many dentists, and less than a twenty-fifth as many hospital beds as the least rural counties (less than 25 per cent rural-farm). Moreover, only 7 per cent of the babies in the most rural counties were delivered by a doctor in a hospital, and 46 per cent were born with a midwife in attendance. Whereas in the least rural counties nearly 75 per cent of the babies were delivered by a doctor in a hospital, and only 3 per cent by midwives. And in 1940, infant and maternal mortality rates were somewhat lower in urban than in rural places, although there were decided variations among communities of different sizes.

Public education has long been a part of the American tradition. Thus, formal schooling is largely paid for out of public funds, so that the differential in the quantity and quality of education obtained by rural and urban children cannot be accurately measured by the amounts of money their respective parents put into it. But although much progress has been made in the education of American children, there are vast differences between rural and urban areas in the matter of school facilities. School terms are shorter in rural areas than they are in cities, and the rural school curriculum is usually narrower. Furthermore, in 1940, urban teachers were paid salaries that were fully twice as high as those paid to teachers in rural schools, while the average value of school equipment per pupil was also twice as large in urban schools. Then too, rural children drop out of school at an earlier age than do urban children. Of the urban children who were 12 years old in 1940, 84 per cent attended school, whereas only 64 per cent of the rural-farm children of that age were in school. Length of school attendance is reflected in the number of students that finish grammar school, high school, or college. And in 1940 twice as many urban as rural-farm people 25 to 29 years of age had graduated from high school, and over three times as many had a college degree. Indeed, more than a third of the rural-farm population in this age group had not received a grammar-school education.

Although it was temporarily interrupted during the war, rural electrification has made much headway in recent years. Thus, the proportion of farms that are electrified increased from less than a third in 1940 to over a half in 1945. But almost all urban homes (98 per cent) have electricity. Certainly electricity in the home adds much to the efficiency and comfort of the homemaker because of the many electrical conveniences that are now available. Almost as many rural homes as urban ones have radios, but in 1941 less than half as many had electric refrigerators, toasters, mixers, vacuum cleaners, and electric irons. Perhaps running water and the advantages it brings are even more important in the comfort of living. In 1945 but 28 per cent of the farm homes had running water, which is to be compared with 95 per cent for urban homes. Moreover, eight times as many urban homes as rural homes had a flush toilet, and nearly five times as many had bathing facilities. In fact, in the most rural counties only 7 per cent of the families had a bathroom. It is significant, too, that farm families live under more crowded conditions than do urban families. For in 1940 twice as many farm houses as urban houses had an average of one and a half or more persons per room. In addition, a higher proportion of rural homes than of urban homes needed repair. In the most rural counties four out of ten dwellings needed major repairs in 1940, whereas less than two out of ten in the least rural counties needed them.

Recent figures are not available on the expenditures for public services of county, city, village, and other local governments, but in 1932, urban people had an overwhelming advantage over rural residents in this respect. In fact, the amount of money per capita spent in the least rural counties was more than five times as great as that spent by local governments in the most rural ones. To break this down, school expenditures in that year were nearly three times as high in the more urban counties, highway expenditures were over twice as great, expenditures for health and for fire and police protection were twenty times larger, and expenditures for charities, correction, and other public welfare were ten times larger.

In summary, an examination of the items included in the level of living for which adequate measures exist has demonstrated that for the most part rural residents are at a disadvantage. Less can be said about the more intangible elements that are also included. For instance, the amount and distribution of time available to various family members for leisure, recreational activities, and self-improvement vary more within the rural and urban segments of our society than between them. While middle-class values in our society by and large emphasize the worth of time and of its gainful, productive use, there is not too much concern about whether or when a life of retired ease will be achieved. For a good picture of a contrasting value, one may look at the leisurely ways of upper-class Latin Americans. Still, the same contrast is to be found within our own society. And a good statement of the "moderate-tempo" way of life is to be found in Leonard and Loomis's account of the typical farmer in El Cerrito, New Mexico.

Rupert Vance, in his *Human Factors in Cotton Culture* (p. 151), gives a vivid picture of the annual cycle in the life of the cotton grower. As he points out, the annual patterns of labor and relaxation

> . . . are set by nature; they are cultural in the sense that they are determined by the demands of plants for cultivation; they are also cultural in the broader sense of social culture that has resulted from the adaptation of men to land and has been handed down as patterns to be followed. . . .

The annual rhythms thus imposed partly by climate, partly by the crop or product raised, and partly by the traditions and fixed ways of past generations became for the individual and the group criteria by which a way of life is evaluated and found good or not good. If the pattern fails to provide the anticipated amounts and distribution of time for relaxation and a moderate tempo, it is likely to be judged not too good, even though it might yield a larger, surer, or more regularly distributed cash income. Conversely, a way of life that does not call for the habitual amount and distribution of physical labor is likely to be looked down upon as more primitive and hardly respectable, even though its tangible rewards may be quite as satisfying.

Security is a highly prized element in the level of living. Urban residents attempt to achieve it through health and accident insurance, mutual benefit societies, unemployment insurance and other provisions of the Social Security Act, and through public and private retirement plans. Farm people tend to achieve security more through individual effort. Thus, the acquisition and maintenance of a farm and farmhouse are considered bulwarks against the adversities of old age, sickness, and accident. Moreover, retirement among farm operators is often a gradual process, and the operator may continue to get the basic necessities of life from his farm until he dies.

Another intangible element in the level and standard of living – and one that is largely taken for granted by most people in our society, but that cannot safely be overlooked – is the extent to which certain fundamental human rights and freedoms are enjoyed or insisted upon. As Americans, we should not forget how large a part was played by the urge for religious, political, and economic freedoms in the early settlement of this county and in precipitating its War of Independence. Freedom to vote, think, believe, speak, write for publication, play a proper role in government, and to be free from discrimination and oppressive laws and taxes, are but a part of the cultural heritage that is so deeply ingrained it becomes a part of our unconscious standard of living – unconscious until it is challenged or violated. Then each, according to his own way as it is guided by his personal cultural inheritance, becomes conscious, vocal, and active in order to guarantee its restoration. There is no intention here to imply any general rural-urban differential with respect to this aspect of levels and standards of living. What differentials do exist, with respect to levels (freedoms realized) and to standards (freedoms aspired to), are probably more largely along racial, regional, economic, and educational lines than simply along farm-nonfarm or rural-urban lines. But existing differentials between levels and standards in this field have in the past caused, and still are causing, migrations, shifts, and movements. Their importance should not be underrated, even though they cannot be neatly ticketed with a dollar-and-cents valuation.

Regional Variations in Levels and Standards of Living

We have seen the great differences that exist between rural and urban levels of living, but these differences are no greater than those existing between sections of the United States. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics recently made a study of the levels of living in different sections of the country. Over a hundred separate items were analyzed, and comparisons were drawn between the North, South, and West. Incomes, family expenditures, housing, home conveniences, health and medical services, educational facilities, and available business and professional services were included. The same pattern was found for each major item. Thus, farm families in the South had smaller incomes, poorer houses, fewer conveniences, and less adequate medical, educational, and commercial services than farm families in either the North or West had. Franklin D. Roosevelt was indeed well advised when he designated the rural South as "the number one problem area of the nation."

But disadvantaged rural areas are not confined to the South. In 1938 Carl C. Taylor, Helen W. Wheeler, and E. L. Kirkpatrick delineated the areas that had a low level of living in a publication entitled: *Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture.* A map was prepared combining

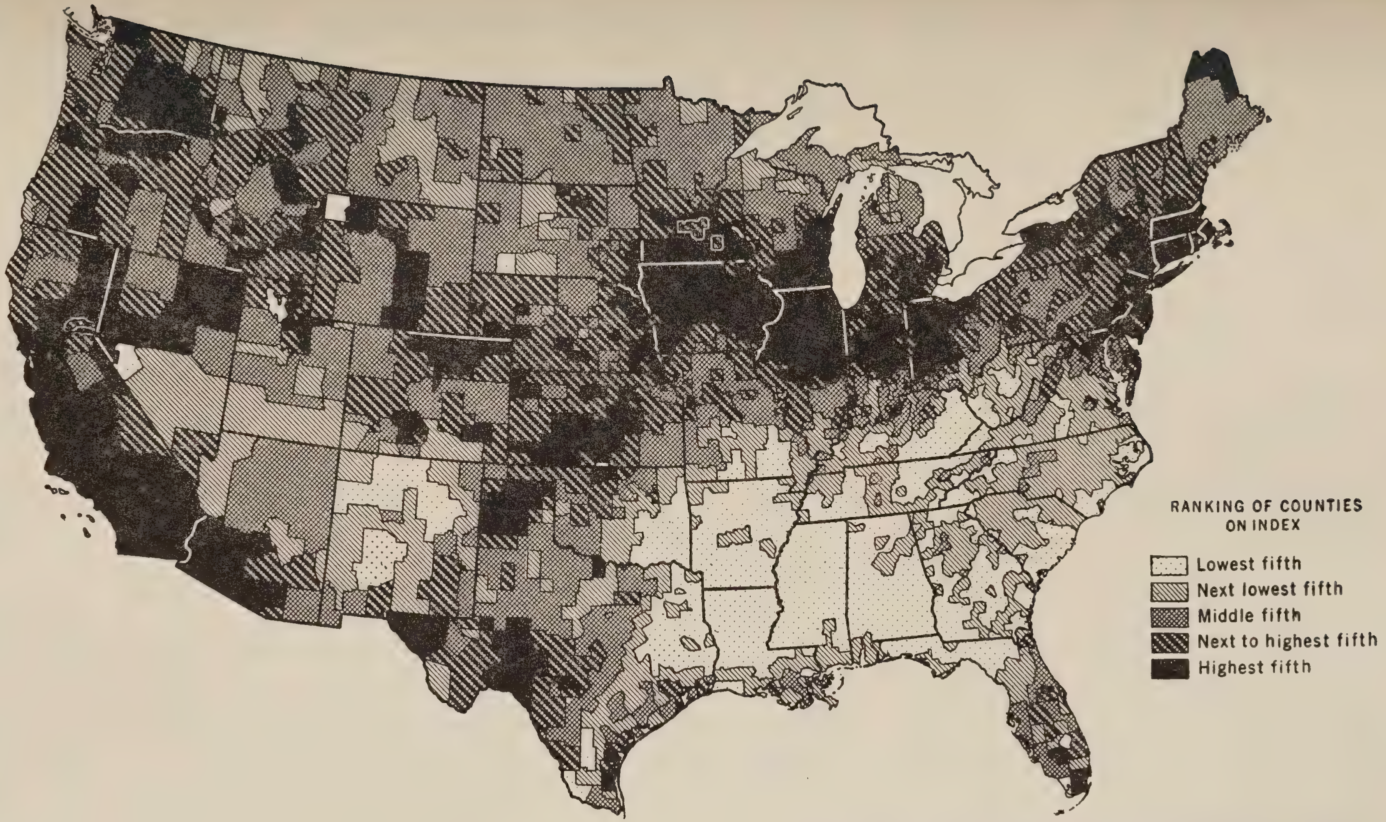
> the areas in which 50 per cent or more of the farms yielded less than $600 farm income in 1929; areas in which 50 per cent or more of all gainfully employed in agriculture were hired laborers in 1930; areas in which 50 per cent or more of all farms were tenant or cropper farms in 1930; areas in which 20 per cent or more of the farms should be replaced because of maladjustment in land uses; areas which had lost all their natural increase in population between 1920 and 1930 and in addition had lost 20 per cent of their 1920 population; areas in which 30 per cent or more of the total population was on relief in June 1935; and areas in which 20 per cent or less had standard of living facilities as measured by an index combining electricity, telephones, radios, automobiles, and water piped to the dwelling.

The most recent level-of-living map for farm-operator families, containing 1945 information, was prepared by Margaret Jarman Hagood.[2] Possession of electricity, telephones, and automobiles, and the gross value of farm products in 1944 were used to construct the index. By comparing the 1944 index figures with those for 1940, it was found that the level of living of farm-operator families, as measured by these items, increased about 25 per cent during the five-year period.

Some of the variation in rural levels of living is related to racial and occupational class differences. For in all of the items for which there is information, Negro farm families are particularly disadvantaged. Their incomes are lower, their housing is less adequate, their medical and educational fa-

---

[2] See map (Fig. 32).


RANKING OF COUNTIES ON INDEX
Lowest fifth
Next lowest fifth
Middle fifth
Next to highest fifth
Highest fifth

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 32 FARM–OPERATOR FAMILY LEVEL–OF–LIVING INDEX, 1945

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.

cilities are poorer, and their possessions are fewer. To some extent the same is true for American Indians and persons of Mexican descent in the farm population. There is also marked disparity in the levels of living of farm operators, sharecroppers, and hired farm laborers. At the same time, migrant farm laborers are in an especially unfortunate position. Their incomes are quite low, and their occupational expenses are high. Moreover, they lack some of the compensatory features of rural life, such as stability, strong community ties, and a measure of security. In addition, many live in urban areas part of the time, and thus acquire a standard of living that far exceeds their actual level of living.

Determinants of Levels and Standards of Living

Although a multitude of factors account for the variations in the levels of living found in rural areas, they may be grouped under three headings: (1) income differentials; (2) variations in needs and desires; and (3) locality differences.

The relation between income and levels of living has already been mentioned. Rural families with low incomes are denied some of the things that money can buy, while families with large incomes are usually able to acquire more goods and services. This is not to say that income is directly related to happiness. For once the basic needs have been met, satisfactions are derived from many other things besides income. In Table 48 the expenditures of farm families at different income levels are noted. It will be seen that in absolute amounts more money is spent for each consumption item as the average income per farm family increases. And expenditures of families with an average income of $1127 exceeded their annual incomes by $10. In other words, at that income level farm families almost broke even, while those with smaller incomes were incurring debts or reducing their assets in order to keep their level of living from falling too far below their minimum standard of acceptable living.

Areas with limited resources obviously yield low incomes, so that families living in those areas have low levels of living. The migration of rural young people to cities and the movement of farm people out of submarginal areas reflect the close relation that exists between resources and income and living conditions. But the presence of so many rural people in depressed areas and the reluctance with which some consider leaving suggest that economic opportunities are not the only decisive factors in choosing a place of residence. In general, then, income roughly prescribes the limits of the level of living, but it does not account for contours that appear within these limits.

Basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing do not vary greatly, but the expression of these needs over the other desires exhibits a wide range of difference. The definitions of what is essential in an acceptable level of living are determined culturally. Probably the only exception, at least for the present, is to be found in the field of nutrition, where the work of scientists all over the world can be pooled to determine standards of nutritional adequacy. This is possible only because the biological nutritional needs of people everywhere appear to be basically uniform. But cultural variations in the modes of attaining adequate nutrition are very great, and will probably remain so even though the scientific measures may be universally applicable.

Most human desires, and all expressions of these desires, are also culturally determined. This may be demonstrated by observing the dominant elements in the levels of living of a Pennsylvania Amish farm family, and of a typical farmer in the Western specialty-crop areas. The Amish family shuns modern conveniences, characteristically does not send the children to college, dresses simply, lives in a fine house, and has a closely knit neighborhood religious life. The Western specialty-crop farmer may or may not live in a fine house, but you may be sure it is well equipped with the latest conveniences; he sends his children to college, and has adopted a more urban way of life. Thus, many differences, both within and among the various regions and sections, are as much the result of culturally determined desires as they are the result of income variations.

TABLE 48

FARM FAMILIES AT DIFFERENT INCOME LEVELS

*Average Outlay of Farm Families for Main Categories of Consumption, Gifts and Personal Taxes, and Savings, by Income Level, 1935–6 **

Income Level	Average Income per Family	Average Outlay per Family for —											
		Current Consumption											
				Shelter									
		All Items	Food	Housing	Household Operation	Clothing	Automobile	Medical Care	Recreation	Tobacco	Education	Reading	Savings
Under $500	$ 339	$ 537	$288	$ 51	$ 54	$ 47	$ 31	$ 22	$ 6	$10	$ 2	$ 3	$— 208
$1,000–$1,250	1,127	1,113	537	128	97	104	88	50	21	16	11	7	— 10
$2,500–$3,000	2,716	1,881	729	256	163	191	217	90	51	22	30	12	777
$5,000–10,000	6,587	2,946	868	488	302	348	395	152	87	33	57	20	3,463

* National Resources Planning Board, "Family Expenditures in the United States." Washington: 1941, p. 51.

Just as income prescribes the limits of family living expenditures, so the needs and desires of the family dictate the particulars of those expenditures. The farm family has many alternative uses for the income it receives. But part of it each year is reinvested in the farm business, and part is used for family living expenses. The relative importance of these alternatives has long been debated. Some believe that farm operation and improvement have first call on farm family income. Others contend that everyday living costs and the farm home constitute more insistent demands. It has been fairly well established, however, that the maintenance of an adequate level of living is most important, and that after this has been satisfied, there are individual and regional variations in the use that is made of the remaining income.

Finally, the location of the farm family itself is an important determinant of its level of living. For people living in sparsely settled rural areas do not have easy access to the educational, health, recreational, commercial, and other services that are available to farm people who live near urban places. In 1940 over a fourth of the farm population lived in counties that had no village containing as many as 2,500 people. Regardless of their incomes, the farm people who live in thinly settled areas cannot expect to have readily available stores, doctors, hospitals, schools, and many other advantages that are found in more populous areas. Parity for farm people cannot, therefore, be fully achieved by price and income adjustments. Perhaps equally important, then, are measures designed to enlarge and improve their health facilities, their schools, and other community services, and these can be accomplished only on an area basis.

CHAPTER 18

RURAL SOCIAL DIFFERENTIALS

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER

Disadvantaged Areas

MANY of the underlying causes of the differences that exist in the social status of rural families have been mentioned in the foregoing chapters. Special attention has been given to such factors as the varying backgrounds of the major population elements, the distribution of the families according to type of farm tenure, and the differences in family incomes and in levels of living. But the social differentials, as one of the most significant aspects of rural life, deserve further study, which it is the aim of this chapter to provide.

These social differentials are much greater in some parts of the country than in others. Broadly speaking, the differences are least in the Eastern, Middlewestern, and high Plains areas, where practically all the population elements are from northern and central Europe, where either farm tenancy rates are low or the status of tenants approximates that of resident landowning families, and where there are relatively few hired farm workers, most of whom are recruited from neighboring farms. The differences are greatest in the Southern, Southwestern, and Far Western areas, where the population elements are composed of widely differing cultural and racial groups, where farm tenancy rates are high and the status of tenants is low, or where numerous people who have practically no property and are unattached are used as seasonal farm wage workers. Wide regional differences are obvious when family incomes and other material criteria commonly associated with social status are regarded from the over-all national point of view. Considerable information about those incomes and other criteria is provided in the chapter on levels and standards of living.[1]

Generalized areas that had disadvantaging conditions were pointed out by two studies made during the 1930's. In 1938 Carl C. Taylor and others (*Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture*) delineated the problem areas on the basis of the relative incidence of families with low incomes, of hired farm workers, farm tenants, farm families on poor land, and migrating farm families. The study showed that the disadvantaged families were concentrated in the Old South (composed of most of the cotton belt, the Ozark Mountains, and the southern Appalachians), in northern New Mexico and Arizona (occupied chiefly by Indians), in the northern high Plains, and in scattered sections that included the Great Lakes cutover country. These disadvantaged areas were delineated by comparing the incidence in each county of the five disadvantaging factors mentioned above with their incidence in the nation as a whole. Quite naturally, therefore, the areas correspond closely with the areas that had the lowest levels of living. The northern high Plains was included among the areas because a succession of dry years had occurred there before the year of the study.

---

[1] A glance at the map on page 305, which shows the 1945 rural levels of living in the United States by counties, will reveal the areas where disadvantaging conditions are concentrated.

The study of *Six Rural Problem Areas,* made in 1935 by Beck and Forster, lists the Appalachians-Ozark area, the eastern cotton belt, the Texas and Oklahoma cotton areas, the Great Lakes cutover area, the spring-wheat area of the northern Plains, and the winter-wheat area of the central Plains. These are much the same areas, except for northern Arizona and New Mexico, as those mentioned in Taylor's study.

The most significant change that has taken place since these studies were made is revealed by the fact that the wheat areas of the plains, which showed up as "problem areas" in the studies, do not rank low in the 1945 level-of-living map. Certainly if a study similar to those of 1935 and 1938 were made today (1948), it would not include these wheat areas, which are now highly prosperous, since for half a dozen or more years the yields have been far above the average for the area. Furthermore, the generally high prices paid for farm products in recent years give a distinct relative advantage to those areas – such as the wheat areas – in which the yields have been far above average. As is discussed in detail in Chapter 22, it is in the wheat areas of the high Plains where rainfall is low and uncertain that crop yields fluctuate most. Thus the high Plains, among the "problem areas" in the middle 1930's, in the middle 1940's are among the most prosperous rural areas in the country.

All the other areas that were described as "disadvantaged" in the 1930's are still disadvantaged. And they were in the same position prior to the 1930's. For their averages are regularly low for family income, for level of living, and for many of the basic community services, such as education and health, that depend largely upon local taxable wealth. Some of the rural families in these disadvantaged areas live as well or better than the average families in the most advantaged sections of the country, but it is in these disadvantaged areas with their low averages that rural slums are most in evidence. Many of these disadvantaged areas will probably remain so in the future. This is particularly likely for those with poor or rough land, such as the Appalachian-Ozark region, the Great Lakes cutover country, the northern New Mexico and Arizona area, and perhaps for the most eroded, older upland parts of the cotton country. For in these areas there is now little probability that the disadvantaging agricultural factors will be overcome within the forseeable future. Some or all of these rural areas, however, may in time be greatly enriched by a further increase in industrial employment for rural dwellers, by the development of scientific forestry, by the expansion of the tourist trade, by the development in favored localities of intensified farming, and by the creation of larger and more adequate farm units as a result of a marked decrease in the farm population.

There are indications now, as a matter of fact, that the more level and more fertile portions of the western and central parts of the cotton country are beginning to lose their disadvantaging factors. For farms here are becoming larger and more productive in reponse to greater mechanization, more diversification of crops, and an increase in the production of dairy and beef cattle. Moreover, during the past fifteen years the number of farm families in these areas has decreased markedly, with the greatest decreases occurring among the more dependent (especially the nonwhite and nonlandowning) farm families.

Submerged Groups

There are in the more prosperous parts of the country, families and groups who have a relatively low status, just as in the poorer areas there are some families with relatively high incomes and levels of living. The status of a family can perhaps best be determined in terms of that family's socio-economic position as compared to the position of other families in the immediate surroundings.

Among rural people it is in the local community, where they have their vital and continuing contacts, that social cleavages are most meaningful, and that a family is identified as belonging to one element or another of the population. Moreover, status factors, such as leadership and social position, operate by locality. This is true also for such vital matters as the participation of families in community affairs, the extent to which the franchise is exercised, the opportunity for presenting all sides of a question before policy decisions are made, the collecting and allocating of most taxes, and the quality and reach of practically all public services, such as schools, police forces, courts, local roads, and the administration of state and Federal health, welfare, and agricultural programs. The members of a family that has a high status in the local rural community are people of local importance almost irrespective of the rank of that community as compared with other communities. Obversely, the members of a family with low status in the local community are usually tagged as underlings almost irrespective of the economic or other stature of that community. These locality-status relationships have little or no meaning beyond the locality, for in any new locality status is determined by the situation that obtains there. Therefore, in thinking of rural social differentials, one must remember that it is the people in each individual locality who create and maintain whatever status differences there are among themselves.

A stranger can usually get a quick estimate of the major social differentials that exist in a given rural community by asking a local resident to describe the population elements of his community. The resident will, of course, mention only the groups that the local people think are of importance. Thus, in some localities farm-tenure groups will be mentioned, while in other localities they will not be. The same holds true of such factors as size of farming operations, type of farm enterprise, nationality, race, religious affiliation, and so on. Seldom will mention be made of any groupings except those that have local significance. The status of the person of whom the inquiry is made also enters into the picture. For whereas a member of an upper-status family may identify a lower-status family by some such term as "ne'er-do-well," "poor white," "red neck," "clodhopper," "Nigger," "Okie," or "greaser," a member of a lower-status family will often refer to a high-status family as a "big farmer," "grower-shipper," "bukra," or "money bags." In addition, there are a number of well-known farm-tenure terms whose implications concerning social status are generally understood. For instance, "landlord," "planter," "manager," "overseer," and "boss" refer to farmers on the upper levels, while "cropper," "hired hand," "casual laborer," "migrant worker," "floater," and "stubble bum" refer to those on the lower levels.

In general, appellations of condescension are applied to rural groups least commonly in those parts of the country, such as in the Middle Western and high Plains areas, where class demarcations are at a minimum. In these areas the people are of the same general racial grouping; farm tenants are often relatives of their landlords, and have incomes and a status approximating those of the local farm owners; and most farm workers traditionally being members of local owner or tenant families, are themselves expected eventually to become farm tenants or owner-operators. Here, too, hired farm laborers often room and board in their employers' homes, and usually do the same work as their employers. By contrast, in those rural parts of the country where appellations of condescension are most frequently used, only a few of the tenants and hired workers are relatives of their landlords or employers, and only a small proportion ever expect to become independent tenants or owner-operators. This is the situation in the South, the Southwest, and on the Pacific Coast (especially the southern end); to a smaller extent it is the situation also in those areas along the Middle Atlantic Coast and in the Northeastern states where seasonal farm wage workers are used in the production of specialty crops. In these portions of the country — and they are extensive — dependent tenants and hired farm workers seldom eat or sleep at the homes of their landlord or employer, and they commonly do stoop types of farm work, such as chopping and picking cotton, thinning sugar beets, and harvesting vegetables, which are considered especially appropriate for croppers and farm wage laborers.

The status of a rural family is determined largely by the size of income, the type of tenure, and the nationality and racial identity. Although these factors do not apply equally everywhere, and in some areas one or more of them will have little or no meaning, they seem, taking the country as a whole, to be the most important considerations. Other determining factors, some of which stem directly from one or more of the three just mentioned, include length of residence, amount of education, type of house, extent of home conveniences, number of outside contacts, and the degree of participation by the family in the organized activities of the locality. Another way to

TABLE 49

Average Value of Gross Farm Incomes and Percentage Distribution of Gross Farm Incomes in Sixteen Sample Counties from Eight Major Type-Farming Areas of the United States in 1939 *

Type-Farming Areas and Counties	Farms with Value of Products				
	Average Value of Farm Products	Percentage Distributions			
		Under $600	$600 to $1,499	$1,500 to $3,999	$4,000 and Over
UNITED STATES	$1,309	47	30	18	5
Corn Belt	2,000	25	31	33	11
High Income County	3,630	7	14	48	31
Low Income County	859	56	31	11	2
Cotton Belt	780	60	31	7	2
High Income County	1,834	23	51	22	4
Low Income County	383	88	13	1	†
Dairy Areas	1,620	31	32	30	7
High Income County	2,413	36	22	26	16
Low Income County	1,298	28	41	28	3
General and Self-Sufficing Areas	760	65	24	9	2
High Income County	1,444	33	31	31	5
Low Income County	260	96	4	†	†
Wheat Areas	1,923	27	33	30	9
High Income County	4,096	29	21	19	31
Low Income County	831	61	31	6	2
Range-Livestock Areas	2,175	42	27	20	11
High Income County	8,467	19	17	13	51
Low Income County	769	82	11	4	3
Western Speciality-Crop Areas	3,256	30	25	27	18
High Income County	5,723	20	18	25	37
Low Income County	1,690	31	33	30	16
All Other Areas	1,273	49	31	15	5
High Income County	2,669	30	49	19	2
Low Income County	542	84	13	3	†

* From the 1940 Census. The 16 counties listed are from a National sample of counties chosen to be representative for the 8 major type-farming areas shown above. The first county listed for each type-farming area is the sample county of that area with the highest average gross farm income, and the second the county with the lowest average gross farm income.

† Less than 0.5 per cent.

assess the social-status differentials is to show the relationship between, on the one hand, such matters as income, tenure, and racial and nationality identity, and on the other hand, the privileges, duties, obligations, and sometimes the rights of farm families. The meaningful stratification of rural families might also be defined in terms of leadership, participation in community affairs, or of the likelihood of intermarriage among the various self-conscious elements of the population.

The social position of a family in a rural community is seldom determined wholly by the size of its income, but year-in and year-out income is almost everywhere an important factor in determining status. As may be seen in Table 49, the average size of gross farm incomes varies widely throughout the country. In the Western specialty-crop areas the average in 1939 was four times that in the general and self-sufficing areas and that in the cotton belt.[2] The averages for the corn belt and the dairy, wheat, and range-livestock areas were at least twice those of the two low-income regions. Though farm incomes had more than doubled by 1944, the relative differences between the type-farming areas and within them remained much the same.

Yet greater differences, it will be observed, appear within each major type-farming area between its "richest" and its "poorest" sample counties than between the averages of these major areas. In fact, only in the dairy areas is the difference between the high- and low-income counties less than two to one, whereas in the Western specialty-crop areas it is over three to one, in the corn belt four to one, in the wheat areas and the cotton belt five to one, in the general and self-sufficing areas a little over five to one, and in the range-livestock areas over ten to one. It is significant, too, that the distribution of incomes within each of the sixteen sample counties shows that while each had incomes ranging from under $600 to over $4,000, in all but two counties a fifth or more of the incomes were under $600, and in six counties over half of the farms had gross incomes that were under this amount. Figures for the township or trade-center communities would usually present a similar picture. For even within localities farm incomes vary greatly nearly everywhere in the country. And wherever marked differences in income exist, there is a tendency for the families with the higher incomes to live in better houses, to spend more for health care and for the education of their children, to have more outside contacts of both a business and social nature, and in general to have a higher social position in the locality than the families with markedly lower incomes.

Although in many of the Northern parts of the country there is often little relationship between farm tenancy and social position, in the South, and especially in the extensive cotton belt, where the status of the tenant is practically always lower than that of the owner or manager, there is usually a clear relationship. The differences in status associated with the difference between farm tenancy and farm ownership are least in the corn belt, in the wheat areas, and in some parts of the Far West. But even in these sections there are differences, as was pointed out by Arthur L. Moore when, in his *The Farmers and the Rest of Us,* he took an over-all look at the prosperous, mechanized, high-tenancy areas of the corn belt. He found that while the tenant, as compared with the owner-operator, may have as much, or more, machinery and as great, or even greater, net income, somehow a landowning farmer seems to command more deference when, at a school meeting, a church gathering, or in the county courthouse, the people are looking at their own situations and deciding what to do.

Indeed, on one basis or another, there seems to be some social stratification in practically all rural communities. For example, Earl H. Bell found, in investigating his prosperous, homogeneous, all-farm home community in

---

[2] See Chapter 19 for a full discussion of the delineation of all counties into seven major type-farming areas and a residual.

Iowa, that the small-town bankers and their associates constituted a top status group, which was followed, in order, by the town business families and the more successful farmers, the poorer farmers (mostly farm tenants), and, at the bottom, the occasional laborers (whether living in the town or in the open country). The farm tenants tended to drop into the lower status group because of the great value placed by the local community upon long residence. For even new townspeople with considerable business operations were not generally accepted on the basis of their economic status, but, rather, earned the right to full local recognition by demonstrating permanency and stability. Bell also reports that this community placed a value upon helping the children of the lower-status families to make all the advancement they could, but it was generally assumed that the adults in some families are at the top or at the bottom of the community structure, and that they are going to stay there because of their own personal qualities. Generally similar status demarcations among the residents of Midwestern rural communities – with the most wealthy long-residence families at the top, and the families of hired farm workers at the bottom – have been set forth more recently by James West in *Plainville, USA,* and by A. B. Hollingshead in "Selected Characteristics of Classes in a Mid-Western Community." The low status position of the families who live primarily by hired farm work in the Midwestern and high Plains areas, where status demarcations are least in evidence, is not hard to understand. For their incomes are traditionally the lowest in the locality; they usually occupy the poorer houses in the open country and in the towns; and now as mechanization enlarges the farm operations and permits the farmer and his family to do more of their own work, fewer of these laborers are needed; and without financial aid they have even less chance than before to get started as farmers.

But it is upon the nonwhite portions of the rural population that the greatest status demarcations center. Relatively larger proportions of the nonwhites are identified with the low-status farm wage workers, dependent tenants, and low-income town dwellers. This is true irrespective of whether they are pre-white residents (American Indians), residents from colonial times (American Negroes), or the more recent immigrants from the Orient (Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos).

Class Demarcations

In practically all the parts of the United States where there are nonwhites, the rural nonwhite population element constitutes a class grouping. Any basis of social stratification has real meaning as related to class structure when the readiness with which a person or family may move from one status group into another is impeded by local practices and values. Thus the accidental economic, social, or political position of a person or family at any given time in a locality is of little class meaning unless local forces make it difficult for that person or family to change his or their status position in the locality. Class factors – factors that go to create a class structure – have real meaning as such when differences in opportunities to secure an education, earn a livelihood, and participate in political matters make it "natural" for some individuals and families to occupy the lower economic, social, and political positions while others readily remain at a higher level. In most American rural communities it is the class factor of racial identity that more than any other one factor determines the social status of an individual or family, and the nonwhites are uniformly concentrated in the lowest status group.

The rural nonwhite population is very unevenly distributed over the United States, being concentrated in those parts of the country where foreign-born whites are least common. In 1940 nearly 95 per cent of the rural-farm nonwhites lived in the South, a little over three per cent lived in the West, and two per cent lived in the North. Over 98 per cent of the rural-farm Negro population lived in the South, less than two per cent in the North, and less than one sixth of one per cent in the West. Nearly half of the Indians lived in the West, a little over a third in the South, and a sixth in the North. Of the remaining nonwhite rural dwellers – Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Hindus, and others – 98 per cent lived in the West, less than one per cent in the South, and a little over one per cent in the North. The nonwhite rural-nonfarm dwellers (who live principally in small towns) were distributed over the country in much the same proportions as the nonwhite farm population, and nearly everywhere this group provided relatively large numbers of farm wage workers.

From the Negro group, which constituted 15 per cent of the rural-farm population of the nation, came over half of the cropper families. Three fourths of all Negro farm operators were dependent tenants (including croppers); and most of the Negro landowners, although more independent than the tenants, often had only small farms, so that their incomes were only slightly, if at all, above those of most tenants. The Negro landowners as a group constitute the most independent and stable element of the rural Negro population, and as such they provide much more than their proportionate share of the leadership for the churches and other organized activities of that racial group. But the Negro's opportunity to become a landowner is rather limited, for in most areas Negroes cannot buy farms on the open market, but must rely upon a more personal arrangement with some influential white family.

Most of the rural Filipinos, Chinese, and Hindus are either full-time wage workers or small operators who live largely by farm wages. The Indians usually live on reservations and use the land in common – land that is seldom fertile enough or cultivated intensively enough to improve their present generally low economic status. They usually go out to do farm wage work only in small numbers and for short periods, although in some localities they have been more available in recent years.

The Japanese, the latest addition to America's rural nonwhite population, early showed a marked tendency to rise rapidly on the agricultural ladder by ascending from wage labor through farm tenancy to farm ownership. The tendency toward ownership, however, has been checked in the Far West by state alien land laws, which prohibit ownership of agricultural land by Orientals who are not eligible for United States citizenship through naturalization. The evacuation of all Japanese-Americans from the West Coast during World War II further reduced their hold on the land as owners and tenant operators.

It is true that the nonwhite farm families, as compared with the white farm population, are characterized by less stability with respect to residence. But this is accounted for wholly by the greater extent of nonownership among them, for the length of occupancy in the same house for nonwhite owner-operators, tenants, and croppers averaged as long, or longer, than that for the corresponding white tenure groups. The average number of years of occupancy for farm operators in most counties in the South, where 95 per cent of the nonwhite farm operators live, was under ten years. Only scattered counties outside the South were so low, and most of these were in the Southwest, the Far West, and in the intermountain sections where nonwhites and Spanish Americans and Mexicans (often treated much as nonwhites) are employed as wage hands in the production of sugar beets and specialty crops. The nonwhite farm operators, as was pointed out in the chapter on levels and standards of living, also have distinctly fewer household conveniences and less equipment than white operators have. And numerous local studies made throughout the country indicate that there are great differences between whites and nonwhites in matters of diet, clothing, medical care, and participation in local community affairs.

In most parts of the country the low-class status of the various nonwhite elements of the population has been institutionalized in many important ways. For the nonwhites not only occupy the lowest tenure classification and live in the least adequate and most poorly furnished houses, but they also usually have separate schools, churches, and social activities, and live in distinct, segregated sections of the towns, villages, and migrant camps. In 1940 the average number of school grades finished by the rural-farm white population over twenty-five years of age was 8.0, while for Negroes it was 4.1, and for all other nonwhites, 5.4. Another aspect of the same picture is that only a seventh of the whites had not gone beyond the fourth grade, as compared with three fifths of the Negroes and two fifths of all other nonwhites.

The participation of nonwhites in the life of rural communities is also usually more limited than for any other element of the population, with the greatest limitations appearing in the South and West, and the smallest in the North and East. Nonwhites in the South have practically no representation among officeholders, are seldom called up for jury service, and few qualify to vote under the white primary, the poll tax, the long residence requirement, and the various other qualifications. In fact, the six states that nominate political candidates through the white primary, and the eight states that had the poll tax as a requirement for voting in the last presidential election are in the South, where Negroes are most numerous. The limiting effects of such qualifications on the franchise are indicated by the fact that in the 1944 presidential election, as shown by the *World Almanac and Fact Book,* less than one third of the potential voters in twelve Southern states voted, as compared with over three fourths in the other thirty-six states. Indeed, less than one fifth of the people over twenty-one years of age voted in Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. In the Georgia and Mississippi primary elections of 1946, Negroes participated in larger numbers than usual, but in both states the "white supremacy" candidate won (in Georgia the victory was due to the county unit system, which permits a minority of votes from rural counties to win). The poll tax as a prerequisite for voting was abolished in Georgia in 1945, and the voting age was lowered to 18 years. Recent decisions of the Supreme Court undermining the legality of the state white primary method of selecting Democratic candidates have resulted in more voting in recent elections in many Southern states. As may be seen in Table 50, however, residence requirements for voting are highest in the twelve states of the South, where the average state, county, and voting precinct residence requirement – and especially the county and precinct ones – are much longer than they are in the other thirty-six states. The limited participation of Negroes in community affairs, which is indicated by the above facts, is accompanied by a greater likelihood of their being arrested, convicted, and receiving heavier sentences than the whites, and of their being victims of mob violence. The nonwhites in the Southwest and on the Pacific coast also are granted but a limited participation in community affairs, and the restrictions follow a pattern somewhat similar to that of the restrictions of the Negroes in the South, although the pattern in this case is usually neither so completely institutionalized nor so strict.

TABLE 50

Average State, County, and Voting Precinct Residence Requirements for Voting in Twelve Southern States and in the Remaining Thirty-six States *

	Previous Residence Required	
Political Unit	Average for 12 Southern States †	Other 36 States
State	16 months	10 months
County	9 months	3 months
Voting Precinct	4 months	1⅓ months

* Averages computed from data shown for each of 48 states in *World Almanac and Fact Book*, 1946, p. 523.

† Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Broadly speaking, foreign-born whites occupy a status position between the nonwhites at the bottom and the old-line white Americans at the top. The foreign-born whites constitute less than a twenty-fifth of the total rural population, the nonwhites form nearly an eighth, while the native-born whites account for six sevenths. The native-born whites, in the majority in all major regions of the country, are in the greatest majority in the Middle Western and Great Plains areas, where a high proportion of them are the children or grandchildren of foreign-born whites who settled in these areas between 1870 and 1910. Foreign-born whites are most in evidence in the Northeast and in the most recently settled states in the Middle West and the Great Plains, where there are fewest nonwhites. Particularly in the North and Middle West they live largely in the urban rather than in the rural areas. As a matter of fact, in 1940 only one fifth of the 11,400,000 foreign-born whites in this country lived in rural areas; and less than half of these rural residents lived on farms, the remainder being rural-nonfarm residents. The Germans, of which there were 149,000 in the rural-farm population, were the most numerous; then came, in the order given, the Canadians (French and other), Swedes, Norwegians, Mexicans, and Russians.

The foreign-born whites who are least differentiated from the native-born whites are those from northern Europe, particularly the English, Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Germans. They have settled in the North Central States, where the largest proportion of the native-born whites are the direct descendants of immigrants from these same countries. The central and southern Europeans, that is, the Poles, Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Russians, Lithuanians, Italians, and Turks, are usually more clearly set off as self-conscious groups, whether in the North Central states or elsewhere. Of all the groups of foreign-born whites, the Mexicans are the most completely set apart from the native-born whites.

Except in the North Central states, and to some extent even in these, there has been a general tendency for the native-born white residents who own land, or who are tenants of sizable farms, to look upon themselves as being a higher status group than the newcomers, who usually have smaller economic resources, and who often have to learn the language and customs of this country after they arrive. Such was the situation when the Irish came in the late 1840's and early 1850's, as well as when, later on, the central and southern Europeans, French Canadians, Mexicans, and others came in great numbers.

The differences in the status of the various foreign-born white groups seem to be related to (1) their general economic and social level in the countries from which they migrated, and (2) the sections of the United States in which they settled. For example, most of the immigrants from northern Europe settled, as has already been mentioned, in the newer North Central states and Plains areas, where people of these same nationalities had migrated earlier, so that it was relatively easy for them to fit into the local situation. Moreover, most of these immigrants had backgrounds of independent living in Europe. Many central Europeans, especially Russians and Poles, have also moved into the Midwestern and Plains states. But they usually form distinct settlements of their own, although most of their farming operations resemble the others in the locality, except for the fact that the farms are often smaller or located in the less attractive farming sections.

The southern Europeans and the French Canadians came to this country with a background of a generally lower socio-economic status than the northern Europeans, and they settled largely in the long-established states in the Northeast and in the eastern part of the Middle West. They live more or less to themselves, partly because the native-born whites do not accept them on a social basis, and partly because they prefer their traditional ways of doing things. Many of the earlier immigrants from central and southern Europe, as well as the French Canadians, have become successful farm operators and have expanded their holdings. In fact, an increasing proportion of the better tobacco and truck lands in the valleys of the Connecticut, Mohawk, and other rivers of the Northeast are operated and owned by these late comers. A distinctive characteristic of these families is that their wives and children, unlike those of the old-line native-born white families, work in fields along with the men. This same practice is often followed, although to a less marked degree, by the immigrants from northern Europe in the Middle Western and Plains areas.

Foreign-born Mexicans, generally accustomed to low standards of living, enter the United States along its southern borders, where for decades Anglo-Americans have been sharply demarcated socially from the Spanish Americans, the Indians, Negroes, and earlier Mexican immigrants. The result is that the foreign-born Mexicans are often treated more like nonwhites than like whites. Segregated schools and segregated living quarters are often maintained in the towns and in the farm labor camps, and, as compared with any other foreign-born white group, the Mexican group has the largest proportion of low-status farm wage workers.

Rural Social Differentials – in Retrospect and Prospect

Historical considerations are involved in the social differentials that exist today in American rural life. Plantation backgrounds account in considerable part for the generally low status of the great numbers of both Negro and white nonlandowning farm operators in the South. On the other hand, the settlement of the frontier in all parts of the country as the population expanded westward has been a dynamic factor in reducing status differences. For over a period of more than a hundred and fifty years free white families without property could move into the unsettled sections where land was cheap, if not free, and thus become farm owners. The country was developing so rapidly that within a generation numerous families, who had barely been able to take up cheap frontier land, raised their social status to that of substantial landowners by holding on to their land and using it. Some indentured servants were among those persons who had had little or no property in the older settled areas, and escaped their identity as such by becoming landowners on the frontier.

It was not, however, nearly so much the "free" land of the frontier as it was the rapid rise in land values caused by the increase in population and the general development and expansion of the country that enabled the families to raise their economic and social status. For in considering the role of frontier land in the development of rural life in the United States, it is important to remember that, as was pointed out in Chapter 15, comparatively few families settled on free land, but, rather, bought land at the price then prevailing. The nationwide developments that have helped farm families to raise their status by taking up and holding on to land include: the expanding markets for farm products which have accompanied the industrialization of this and other countries; the building of the transcontinental railroads and highways; the emergence of commercial farming; and the production and use of effective farm machinery.

To return to the origins of pronounced social-status differences, they have developed among rural people in practically all the localities in which there have been marked differences over a period of time in the size of the incomes and/or the extent of participation in community affairs. Although such differences are usually most marked between racial and nationality groups, they are by no means limited to these. For example, in Southern plantation areas there are great status differences between the native-born white landlords and the native-born white sharecroppers; on the West Coast the numerous native-born "Okies" who work as farm wage workers are set apart; and in many Middle Western communities the native-born white "Kentuckians" who have migrated there usually occupy a lower socio-economic position than the local long-time residents.

Differences in status may also be marked in areas where family incomes are more or less the same, a situation that obtains among the farm-tenant and owner-operator families of the Middle Western and Plains states. It is their lack of permanent residence and their resulting smaller participation in community affairs that give the tenant families a somewhat lower position in the locality, for, as has been pointed out elsewhere, their incomes are on the average about those of the owner-operator families. But without a permanent stake in the land they usually take less interest in soil conservation, in their dwellings, and in the life of the community. As Kolb and Brunner expressed it in *A Study of Rural Society:* [3]

> In tenant dominated communities all types of social organizations tend to be weaker and less progressive than in localities in which owners preponderate. One obvious reason for this lies in the insecurity of the renter's tenure. . . . He hesitates to form ties until he feels more certain of permanence. Eventually, perhaps, he habituates himself to living more apart from organized-social life than does the owner who, because of his capital investment, is likely to be more securely anchored to the locality and, therefore, more interested in its social life.

If this is a correct appraisal of the community status of the tenant family in the Middle Western farm community, is there not a great likelihood that with the passage of time there will emerge in these areas, where there have traditionally been least differences between owners and farm tenants, a rather distinct status group based on farm tenure?

There are other developments that also point in the direction of increased status differences in rural life. These include the purchase of farm lands by wealthy urban dwellers, and the expansion of "corporation farming." For the purchases of farm lands for use as "show places" or "play farms" by wealthy urban dwellers increase status differences by bringing in part-time residents who are in an income group of their own and who usually have most of their social contact outside the locality. Moreover, a "show place" frequently is formed by consolidating the acreage of several family-sized farms. Corporations, as well as wealthy individuals, are undertaking the extensive use of land, especially in parts of the wheat areas and in some of the Eastern sections of the country where vegetables can be grown most successfully, and they, too, displace resident farm families by the expanded use of machinery that is operated by hired farm workers and by the use of seasonal laborers.

---

[3] Kolb, J. H. and Brunner, Edmund deS.: *A Study of Rural Society.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1940.

The other side of the picture is that the increased use of machinery on family-sized farms is resulting in the farm family itself being able to do most or all of its own work, thereby reducing the number of people in the locality who need to live primarily by farm wages. Significant developments along this line have already occurred in the corn and wheat country, where great numbers of extra workers were formerly needed at harvest time, but where combines and corn pickers now permit the farm family to do most of the work. In the dairy areas, too, the increased use of milking machines has reduced the dependence of farm families upon hired workers. The result actually is twofold: the total farm population is decreasing in the corn, wheat, and dairy areas; and status differences, which have never been very great, are declining further as the number of hired farm workers decrease and as fewer farm workers come into these areas from the outside.

The new farm machines that are now beginning to be used will perhaps result in still greater changes in rural status groups. For the mechanical cotton picker, the mechanical cane cutter, and the mechanical sugar-beet harvester, each displaces more hand labor than is displaced by almost any other farm machines. Many of the people who are being displaced by these machines are resident Negroes and migrant Mexicans, groups long characterized as low-status farm tenants and farm wage workers. Already the mechanization of sugar-beet production is beginning to slow down the movement of migrant Mexicans into the beet-growing sections scattered throughout the western half of the country, with their immigration being particularly slowed in California, where beet blockers and harvesters are now being used most widely. And Negroes, who generally occupy the lowest status in most of the rural localities in which they live, accounted for a disproportionate share of the decrease between 1930 and 1945 in the number of farm operators in the cotton belt as cotton acreage was reduced and the number of farm tractors increased. During this period the number of farm owners increased by one fourth, while the number of all tenants (including croppers) decreased by one third, and croppers alone decreased by nearly one half. It is significant, in view of these changes, that the number of Negro farmers decreased by one fourth, as compared with a decrease by one twelfth of white farmers. It should also be pointed out here that during the first ten years of this period, when there was much unemployment and almost any kind of farm was generally preferred to relief, Negro farm operators decreased much more rapidly than did white operators (the respective decreases were 23 per cent and 1 per cent); whereas during the last five years of the period, when attractive nonfarm employment was available, the racial rates of decrease were reversed (1 per cent for Negroes, and 4 per cent for whites). Another significant aspect of the changes now taking place in rural social differentials is that the number of farm operators is decreasing faster in the South, which is the lowest income region of the country, than in any other area, and that the nonowning and nonwhite farmers with the lowest status are decreasing the most rapidly. Some of the people who are leaving the tenant group, particularly the whites, are becoming farm owners, but some, especially the Negroes, are dropping down the agricultural tenure ladder into the subtenant farm-labor group.

In a recent statement on the "Impact of Technology on Southern Agriculture," Dr. G. W. Forster of North Carolina State College expressed well some of the basic status angles involved in the increase of mechanization in the South:

> A distinctive characteristic of Southern economy including agriculture is the division of the population into three groups — Negroes, poor whites, and a dominant white class. This horizontal division of the economy has far reaching effects and implications. It may determine the extent to which Southern farming may be modified by the introduction of technologies. This character, as I have observed it, tends to prevent the Southerner from considering any problem and its solution objectively. It is not the fact that a critical problem exists which is of major importance, but how its solution will affect the social stratification of Southern society. If perchance the solution of any problem, even a minor one, means that this stratification will be altered, then the Southerner will readily resign himself to the problem since the cure, in his opinion, is worse than the disease. And since most technologies do affect social stratification the South may face a difficult task in adopting technological devices and processes and in retaining, at the same time, these social distinctions. If the impact of technology becomes so overwhelming as it did in the Industrial Revolution, then this social stratification would disappear or become greatly modified.

The increase of farm machinery in the South, as elsewhere, may be expected to give rise to new status groupings. For if the machines are operated by hired workers, as will be true at least at the outset, the operators of these machines and the repairmen in the towns will constitute new status groups.

As for the West, the emergence and expansion of irrigation farming in the western half of the country may have special significance with respect to new patterns of rural social differentials in these areas, and also perhaps in other parts of the country. For much more important than the new farming opportunities that have been created by irrigation are the distinctive qualities that it has introduced into rural life: the immediate high price of land; the settlement of a whole unit of land at the same time; the absence of the solitary frontier family; and the use, from the outset, of the latest farm machinery and of all modern communication and transportation facilities. The result is that farming is very intense and highly specialized, with everything being geared to the production of standardized speciality products in carload, or even greater, lots in order to secure a profit on the high capital investment involved. Farm management in this type of enterprise is most nearly a profession, for land, machinery, labor, and markets must be put to their most productive uses.

Moreover, to the specialty farmer the ownership of land is often of secondary concern to being able each year to rent tracts that are ready, through the established crop-rotation system, for the particular crop he is producing. Other major considerations with him are to have the use of the specialized machinery and labor he needs just when he needs them. The result is that he does not put a primary value on the ownership either of land or machinery, or on having in his own family the labor that is required. The needed labor can be secured through a professional labor contractor in a local village or farther away, the type of land wanted can be leased, while the farm machinery used may be owned by a company that specializes in the preparation of the seed bed, the planting and cultivating of crops, the spraying of insecticides, or in the operations of harvesting. But the big producer may find it even more important to arrange, sometimes before planting, for the mass marketing of his products in distant metropolitan areas than to be expert in securing land, machinery, and seasonal labor. Although these production matters are very important, he can usually hire someone to take care of them, whereas if the market outlets have not been properly arranged well in advance, the whole venture may fail.

These distinctive qualities of irrigation farming have largely framed the rural social differentials that exist in the area. In response to them have arisen, on the one hand, the unusually high-income farm operators, and on the other, the low-income seasonal workers, many of whom are migrant laborers. The high-income operators and the low-income seasonal workers, then, are products of such modern developments as fast communication and transportation and the production of specialty crops through the specialized use of land, farm machinery, seasonal labor, and mass marketing. Specialty-crop farming in the older Eastern areas of the country is also being organized along somewhat similar lines. Will farm operations in other areas become more specialized as mechanization increases, and as wider use is made by farmers of transportation and communication facilities? If so, what changes, if any, will take place in the traditional values that farm operators give to the ownership of land and machinery, in the size of the rural population, and in the characteristics of the local status groupings?

As farming becomes more highly specialized and capitalized, it may be increasingly difficult for the man who starts off as a farm laborer to become a farm operator. There is considerable evidence that such is already the situation, for in the better farming areas a person cannot start into farming without a sizable investment, while in the poorer farming areas the rate of population increase is high and the population pressure upon the land is great. Will these factors, if operative over a period of time, create a permanent farm-labor class? The answers to this question seem to lie outside of agriculture more than within it, for long before now, had there not been the ready opportunity for rural people to move into urban employment, there would have been a tremendous surplus of rural labor, and these surplus workers would have had little choice but to compete disastrously among themselves, earning a meager livelihood by such farm work as there was available for them. With more machinery and larger farms, agriculture can afford the farm laborer a good chance to move up into farm operatorship only if the number of farm laborers is small in relation to the number of jobs available to farm laborers.

Still other matters that are dynamically related to changes in rural social differentials within rural communities, and between rural and urban communities, are the increase of part-time farming and the closer relations between town and country people which have been brought about by faster transportation and communication. The increase of part-time farming in various parts of the country is reducing the status demarcations by permitting more farm people to increase their incomes and to improve their dwellings. The number of middle-income, open-country dwellers is also being increased as nonfarm people who work in towns make their homes in the open country. Although most of their interests are at first centered in the urban community where they work rather than in the open country where they live, their children attend the local schools and, as time passes, a new type of community, the "rurban" community, tends to emerge. Furthermore, town-country relations are becoming closer as the farmers rely more upon expert mechanics for machinery repairs; the bakery and laundry for bread and clean clothes; the co-operatives for farm supplies and as market outlets for farm products, and the consolidated schools located in the trading centers for education and sometimes recreation. And now that local neighborhood activities are on the wane as farms become larger and fewer, roads improve, and automobiles become more common, farmers are looking increasingly to the towns as their most natural meeting places.

In summary and conclusion, social-status groupings in rural America may be less stable now than they have been at any other time in our nation's history, particularly since farm people and town dwellers are becoming more closely identified with each other. Also of great importance for the future of these groupings are the imminent spread of specialized farming and the probable rapid mechanization of the production of three of the crops — cotton, sugar cane, and sugar beets — around which vast numbers of the lowest-status rural dwellers have long been concentrated. All three of these crops will undoubtedly suffer a permanent decline if they continue to be produced by traditional hand methods, whereas use of new powered farm machinery will greatly reduce the number of people needed. Such mechanization of these crops as is already under way clearly demonstrates two things: first, that the greatest displacements will occur among the low-status groups of croppers and farm wage workers, especially the Negroes and Mexicans; and second, that the majority of the people who remain on farms in these areas will have higher incomes and levels of living. Where the people who leave the land will go, and what they will do, will be determined in large part by the livelihood opportunities available to them elsewhere. As things look now, they will continue to turn to nonfarm work in urban areas. And it may be that the decrease of status differences occurring in the rural areas as they move out will be accompanied by the further increase of status differences in the cities to which they go.

Meanwhile, as always, the rural communities in the nation that are most stable, and that have within them the least evidences of self-conscious status groups, are those in which the members place a real value on all the people owning and operating their own farms, and in which a community-wide effort is made to establish maturing youths on the land as owner-operators, either in the locality or in some other suitable area. The best illustrations of such communities are the Mormons, the Mennonites, and other closely knit church-centered groups.

PART IV

RURAL REGIONS

CHAPTER 19

RURAL CULTURE

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER AND CARL C. TAYLOR

Rural Life in the United States by Major Type-Farming Areas

The significant social aspects of rural life have been set forth, one after another, in the previous chapters of this book. In this and the following chapters the more important of these various aspects have been integrated for description and analysis of rural life in the United States by major type-farming areas, so that the reader may readily see how these various social aspects of rural life operate in the lives of the people in a generalized locality. The seven chapters that follow this one describe more specifically the rural life in each of the seven major type-farming areas of the nation — the corn belt, the cotton belt, the dairy areas, the general and self-sufficing areas, the wheat areas, the range-livestock areas, and the Western specialty-crop areas. These major type-farming areas are used as bases in describing modes of rural life because much significant material has been compiled on the manner, means, and methods of making a living in each of these areas. It is known that there is a general relationship between the way rural people make a living and their levels of living, the range and type of contacts they have with other rural families and with townspeople, the viewpoints they hold, and the things for which they aspire.

In the chapters that follow, no attempt is made to define culture or cultural area in precise terms, and little attention is given to the various schools of thought concerning the nature and composition of culture. Rather, the term "culture" is used broadly, referring to the more or less well organized and persistent ways of life and of making a living, and including the attitudes and values of the people. It is by these things that one may compare or contrast other groups of people who have similar or different work habits, group organizations, viewpoints, and values. Many of the characteristics described may be "social" rather than "cultural," but the comparisons are valid no matter what the definitions. Therefore, whether culture is described as consisting only of the thoughts, ideas, values, myths, and legends of the people, or as a complex whole that includes artifacts as well as beliefs, need not trouble the reader. Moreover, in these chapters only matters of central social significance on which comparable data could be secured have been utilized. These include the origins and backgrounds of the people in each area, the adaptations they have made since coming into the area, any significant survivals persisting from life in other places, the ways of making a living, the range and types of their organizations, and the attitudes and values that are held. When these matters are all looked at in relation to each other, the reader begins to get a picture, for one major type-farming region after another, of rural life in its totality. And immediately following the seven chapters dealing with each of the major type-farming areas, a summary chapter reviews the more important similarities and differences that exist between these areas.

The delineation of rural United States into the seven major type-farming areas was worked out on a county-boundary basis, with 469 counties being figured in the corn belt, 690 in the cotton belt, 268 in the dairy areas, 552 in the general and self-sufficing areas, 250 in the wheat areas, 333 in the range-livestock areas, and 88 in the Western specialty-crop areas. The remaining 406 counties having rural residents contain a variety of small type-farming areas and are grouped together as "all other areas." These consist of the intensive tobacco-growing sections of Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky; the citrus and winter-vegetable land of Florida; the trucking areas along the Gulf Coast and the Atlantic Seaboard; the potato sections of Maine; and the miscellaneous farming of the Great Lakes cutover, the northern Pacific Coast, and the scattered counties in the intermountain areas.

The groups formed by classifying rural people according to type-farming areas are not, of course, the only broad groupings into which rural people of the country may with profit be subdivided for study and comparison. Rural United States could be subdivided according to the Census' four major geographic regions — the Northeast, North, South, and West — or according to its nine divisions of states — New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific — or according to any other combination of states or counties. The rural people of the nation might also be divided into significant groupings according to such nongeographic factors as nationality origins, racial identity, or native and foreign birth; or according to birth rates, size of farm income; whether they live in the uplands or in the river bottoms; whether they farm with machines or without them; whether they produce farm products largely for sale or for home use; or even according to the proportion of rural homes with electricity or other conveniences.

Despite all the criteria that are available by localities, comparatively little work has been done toward delineating culturally homogeneous geographic areas in contemporary society. In thinking of reasons for this it is important to recognize the difficulties involved in such an undertaking. There is, for instance, no definition of culture that is adequate for the complete description of a modern society. Cultural analyses and descriptions of the societies of "simple peoples" do not contain nearly so many variants as would be necessary in describing and analyzing modern society, and no modern society is so integral, so homogeneous, as are the economically and socially isolated "simple peoples." It is probably, therefore, partly for this reason that anthropologists have studied few contemporary groups. It is also probably one of the reasons why most sociologists have studied only aspects of general social life, such as migration, levels of living, delinquency, or family organization, rather than the entire life of the group as a whole. But one must not forget that the culture of a modern society is a symphony of ideas, attitudes, and practices, some of which have come out of the past of the people who compose the society; some of which have developed out of adaptations that they have made to the new physical, economic, and social conditions of living in the areas where they reside; and some of which are derived from ideas and practices that are borrowed almost daily from other cultures. Contemporary groups are characterized by their exposure to a wide range of cultural conditions, and by their adoption of almost any point of view or way of doing things that bids fair to serve their own ends. In analyzing the culture of a contemporary society, the things that must be taken into consideration run the gamut from the physical and economic activities that are essential in making a living to the ideals and aspirations that are held by the people.

The way in which the people of any given rural area make a living is one of the major components of the culture of that locality, and in the seven chapters that follow, this component of culture is used as the frame of reference. But in each of the seven major type-farming areas there are of course other major components of culture that can be identified and the influences of which can be more or less accurately described. For example, in the northeastern part of the dairy areas, dairying may not be so dominant a component of culture, even in the lives of the dairy farmers, as old New England culture is, or as are the influences exerted by urbanization or by the influx of immigrants since 1880. In the general and self-sufficing areas the diversities in farm enterprises are so great that "major type-farming" does not, in many ways, furnish the frame of reference or the focus, although the very presence of these varied farming activities, which are generally characterized by live-at-home farming, the use of simple equipment, low farm incomes, and much off-farm employment to supplement farm incomes, provides many unifying influences within the areas. In the portions of the cotton belt that belong to the Old South, there are historical and traditional components of culture other than cotton growing which not only condition the whole cotton economy, but also in some ways triumph over it. And the same type of thing is true for the Mormon group, which is in reality a big cultural island in the midst of the Western specialty-crop areas. Still, despite the important non-type-farming components of culture found here and there throughout the type-farming areas, a basic contribution to an understanding of rural life in the United States can for several reasons be made by an analytical description of the major type-farming areas as modal cultural regions. First of all, the ways in which most of the farm people make a living are generally similar; second, the material technologies and the nonmaterial techniques of production and marketing are also generally similar; and third, out of these two aspects of rural life arise many common ideologies, opinions, attitudes, and values.

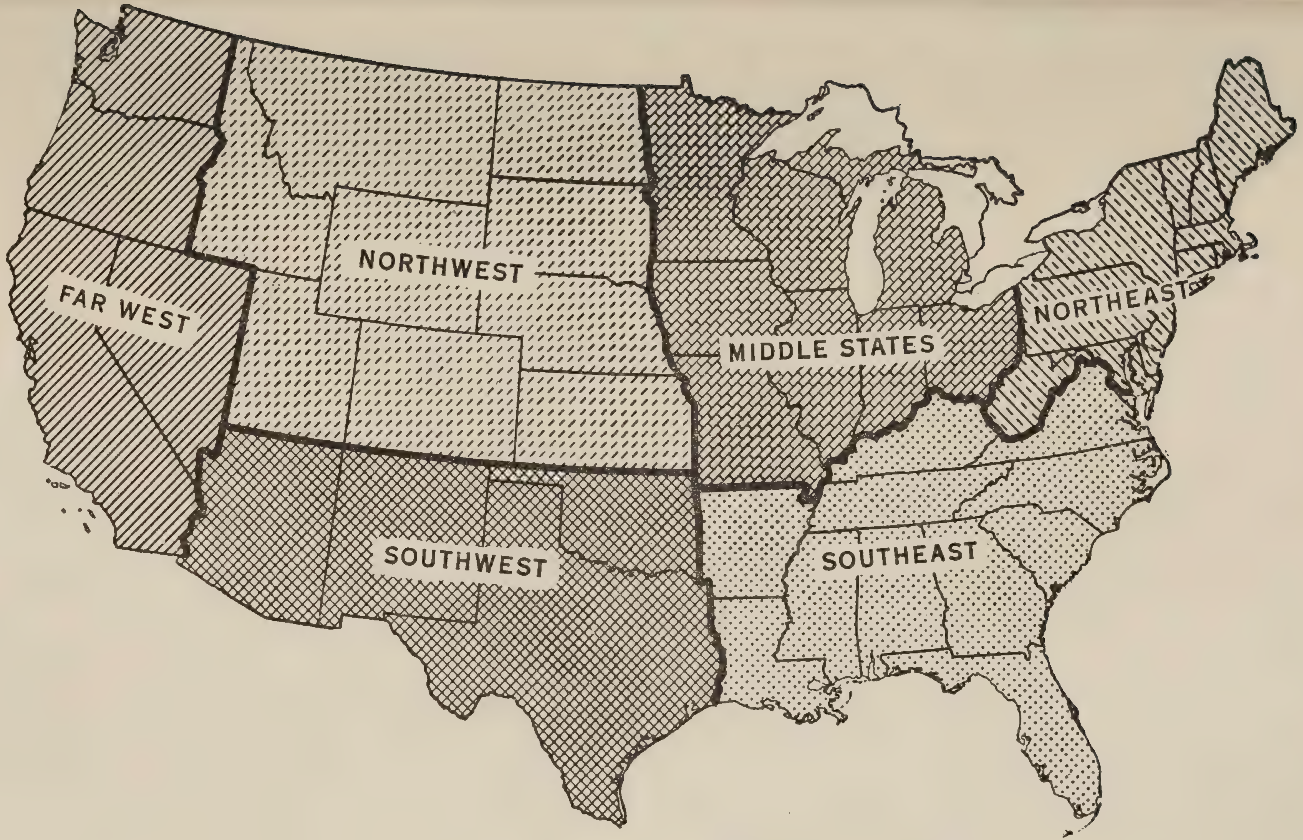
The Concept of the Rural Region

Aside from the delineation of the major type-farming areas by the farm-management experts of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the two most important contributions to the delineation of the United States into meaningful rural areas have been those of Howard Odum and his associates, as set forth in *Southern Regions of the United States* and *American Regionalism,* and of A. R. Mangus, as presented in *Rural Regions of the United States.* Both of these studies make profuse use of statistics and maps.

Odum and his associates, using states as units, divide the country into six geographic regions – Northeast, Southeast, Middle States, Southwest, Northwest, and Far West – with from four to twelve states each.[1] These divisions are described as "the six Major Societal Group-of-States Regions . . . approximating the largest available degree of homogeneity measured by the largest number of indices available for the largest possible number of purposes." It is clear that Odum is far from satisfied with the adequacy of state boundaries in delineating "societal regions," for in presenting a map with hundred-mile indistinct regional boundaries, he says that the map "illustrates the no-man's land of border lines and states and indicates how the regions would be flexible and modified if it were not necessary to utilize state lines." As an illustration, he points out that "the Southwest (consisting of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona) for instance, would follow popular usage" and would include the southern parts of Utah, Colorado, and Kansas rather than stop at the state lines of northern Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona.

In his *Southern Regions of the United States,* Odum presents quantitative data of all kinds for all six regions, but, as the title implies, he centers attention upon two of the six regions, the Southeast and the eastern part of the Southwest. In *American Regionalism,* he and H. E. Moore, the coauthor, discuss regionalism on the national level, showing how it arose and describing the numerous meaningful types of regions that exist in the United States – natural regions that are determined by soil, topography, climate, and river valleys; cultural regions that are based on the largest cities and their rural hinterlands; rural regions that are mapped according to the sixfold regional division of states, and that in addition give some consideration to type-farming areas; literary and aesthetic regions that are treated largely by reference to books; and service regions that hinge on the maze of administrative units of public and private agencies. After a discussion of the historical and theoretical aspects of regionalism from the viewpoints of geographers, anthropologists, ecologists, economists, political scientists, and sociologists, the authors bring all the various ways of looking at regionalism to bear on their analytical descriptions of each of their six divisions of the United States.

[1] See map (Fig. 33).


NORTHWEST
FAR WEST
MIDDLE STATES
NORTHEAST
SOUTHWEST
SOUTHEAST

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 33 THE SIX MAJOR SOCIETAL GROUP–OF–STATES REGIONS UTILIZED IN "AMERICAN REGIONALISM" *

*"American Regionalism," by Howard W. Odum and Harry E. Moore, Henry Holt and Co., N. Y., 1938.

Finally, they plead for public and private agencies to utilize regional planning as a means of insuring that the nation's regional development will be steered away from sectionalism and towards national reintegration.

Unlike Odum and his associates, who laid out six broad regions by states, A. R. Mangus used the county as the unit in delineating 264 "rural cultural subregions" which are combined into 34 "rural cultural regions." In the introductory chapter of his *Rural Regions of the United States,* Mangus points out that he found the state boundaries too crude for his purposes, and therefore used the county, since it is the smallest governmental unit that has a wide range of dependable statistical data. If sufficient data were available for townships or for even smaller units, he would have preferred to use them. "Ideally," he says, "regional lines drawn with the strictest accuracy would ignore political boundaries entirely." In discussing the inadequacy of state boundaries for delineating regions, Mangus writes:

> Many States embrace within their boundaries widely varying areas, and areas of similarity tend to overlap State lines. Many State boundaries are determined by rivers and mountain ranges. Two sides of a river valley tend to be similar even though one may be in Mississippi and the other in Arkansas. Two slopes of a mountain range tend to be similar even though one is in Montana and the other in Idaho. These natural regions tend to cross State boundaries more often than they tend to coincide with them.

Nor was he willing to use type-of-farming areas as a basis for delineating regions.

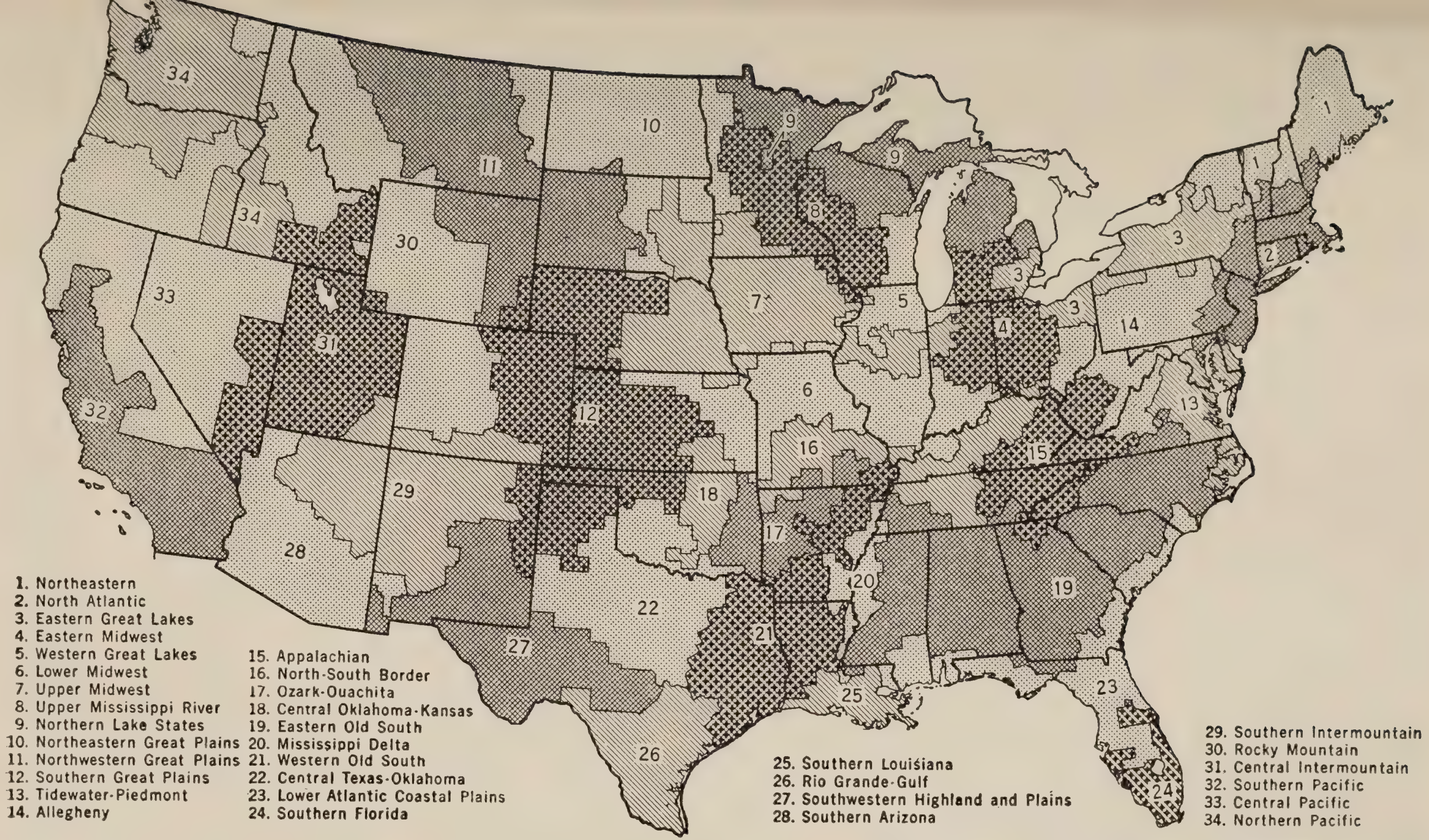
> . . . type of farming was considered relevant but inadequate for social studies in that such regions are based on a single index. While of maximum value in analyzing farm conditions, they do not always coincide with types of people and historical settings.
>
> The present work started with type of farming as a point of departure and placed on top of the farming pattern such factors as population increase, standard of living, land value, tenancy, and race. Where a significant number of these factors overlapped the type of farming, the boundaries of the type-of-farming area were changed to conform to the social pattern. . . . Thus the final result was a division of the rural population of the United States into regions in which the general culture is similar. In sections where a single type of farming is dominant the resulting regions tend to conform closely to type-of-farming areas while in other sections several types of farming may be included in a region which is socially uniform in other respects.

But Mangus's delineation resulted in a modified type-farming map rather than in a cultural map, for type of farming determined all boundary lines except where they were shifted by additional statistical indices that were not being studied in particular, such as population increase, standard of living, land value, tenancy, and race.[2]

Moreover, the thirty-four rural cultural regions proposed by Mangus all have such noncultural geographic designations as Lower Midwest, Upper

---

[2] See map (Fig. 34).


1. Northeastern
2. North Atlantic
3. Eastern Great Lakes
4. Eastern Midwest
5. Western Great Lakes
6. Lower Midwest
7. Upper Midwest
8. Upper Mississippi River
9. Northern Lake States
10. Northeastern Great Plains
11. Northwestern Great Plains
12. Southern Great Plains
13. Tidewater-Piedmont
14. Allegheny
15. Appalachian
16. North-South Border
17. Ozark-Ouachita
18. Central Oklahoma-Kansas
19. Eastern Old South
20. Mississippi Delta
21. Western Old South
22. Central Texas-Oklahoma
23. Lower Atlantic Coastal Plains
24. Southern Florida
25. Southern Louisiana
26. Rio Grande-Gulf
27. Southwestern Highland and Plains
28. Southern Arizona
29. Southern Intermountain
30. Rocky Mountain
31. Central Intermountain
32. Southern Pacific
33. Central Pacific
34. Northern Pacific

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 34 RURAL CULTURAL REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, MANGUS' DELINEATION, 1940 *

* *See Mangus, A. R., "Rural Regions of the United States," Washington, D. C., Work Projects Administration, 1940. Pp. 199-230.*

Midwest, Upper Mississippi River, Northern Lake States, and so on. He cites the statistical data for each of these thirty-four regions, but makes no integrated use of them in a cultural framework. Nor does he deal with such culturally dynamic but nonstatistical matters as the way people are organized, the range of contacts they have with outside groups, the viewpoints they hold, the values they cherish, and the goals to which they aspire. But it is clear that Mangus was aware of the cultural importance of these nonstatistical matters, for he says:

> . . . a fundamental phase of culture consists of nonmaterial traits and their organization into a unified whole. These more fundamental aspects of culture are not directly measurable. Indirect methods must be used to determine cultural differentiation. This involves the selection of quantitative traits or elements whose geographic distribution is known and which are considered as indices or indicators of more fundamental aspects of culture.

Thus, although Mangus did an important piece of pioneer work in using statistical criteria as related to a slightly modified type-of-farming delineation, he did not analyze his own regions in terms of all of the indexes he employed in that delineation, or in terms of any of those numerous important nonmaterial cultural components that, if used, might have bent his delineation either still further away from or back toward the boundaries of the type-farming areas that were his starting points. In 1940 T. J. Woofter, Jr., basing his work on Mangus's studies, developed a map showing the thirty-four "rural cultural regions" with rural industrial areas superimposed. Woofter also renamed many of the regions in such a way as to indicate a high metropolitan population, the presence of plantations, or some important background consideration. As a result, Mangus's "North Atlantic" became Woofter's "Eastern Metropolitan," "Eastern Old South" became "Southeastern Plantation," and "Central Texas-Oklahoma" became "Cattle Trails."

The concept of the cultural region or the cultural area seems to have something of the same meaning for a number of people who have done work in this field, and most of them would agree with the following statement made by Mangus:

> A cultural region or subregion is a major or minor area having a cultural center sufficiently distinct with respect to the presence and organization of traits to differentiate it from adjacent centers. The culture center is represented by that locality where the regional culture is found in its most typical form and is not necessarily the geographic center of the area.

Brief quotations from a few representative authors will suffice to indicate their concepts of the region:

> An area within which the combination of environmental and demographic factors have created a homogeneity of economic and social structure. (T. J. Woofter, Jr.)

> Any one part of a national domain sufficiently unified physiographically and socially, to have a true consciousness of its own customs and ideals, and

to possess a sense of distinction from other parts of the country. (Josiah Royce)

Between the continent and the historic village is an area sometimes larger and sometimes smaller than the political state. It is the human region . . . in which the vegetation, animal and human life have acquired a character due to a permanent association; to the fact that the struggle for existence has brought about an equilibrium among the competing and cooperating organisms. (Robert E. Park)

A region is generally considered to be an area exhibiting homogeneity in one or more of its aspects and thus it represents an areal or spatial generalization. (National Resources Board)

Those areas that show within their boundaries essential uniformity in dominant physical conditions and consequently in dominant life responses. (Mabel C. Stark)

Every region is a domain where many dissimilar beings, artificially brought together, have subsequently adapted themselves to a common existence. (Vidal de la Blache)

A region may be described loosely as an area of which the inhabitants instinctively feel themselves a part. (V. B. Stanbery)

Regions are genuine entities, each of which expresses, both natural and cultural differentiation from its neighbors. (George T. Renner)

The question now is whether the concept of the cultural area has wide validity; our discussions of regional phenomena fully justify the expectation that it has. . . . In general, then, the culture area concept promises to be a lead in social science. (Clark Wissler)

One cannot read anthropological discussions without becoming aware that the procedure is based on a belief in regional differences in social behavior and that social evolution itself is regional. (Clark Wissler)

The study of the cultural history of any particular area shows clearly that geographical conditions by themselves have no creative force and are certainly no absolute determinants of culture. (Franz Boas)

Represents normally a synthesis useful in the organization of knowledge, tinged with a subjective element, and yet evidently resting on something objective because empirical opinion tends to be in essential concord in specific cases. In all these points the culture area is analogous to the faunal or floral area. (A. L. Kroeber)

The history of tribes, nations, and races is one long record of regional realism, in terms of security and productivity, sought through expansion and contraction of regional boundaries. (Carol Aronovici)

Most students of cultural regions will also generally agree with Mangus's statement about the indistinctness of the boundaries of cultural regions:

> Continuous geographic distribution of traits in modern society has made it impossible to locate the boundaries of cultural regions and subregions with exactness or precision. Such regions overlap and interlock with each other, leaving marginal areas where the major type of culture represented by the center is indistinct. Boundaries can be located, however, which approximate the limits of the region or subregion with sufficient closeness to serve most purposes of regional investigation.

But there are two conditions that constitute outstanding exceptions to this indistinctness of the boundaries of rural cultural regions: the existence of the more compact religio-social groups, such as the Mormons, Mennonites, and some rural Catholic groups in predominantly Protestant areas; and the occurrence of very sharp changes in soil or topographical factors, so that distinct breaks in type of farming result. It is a matter of general knowledge that the families in what have come to be called "cultural islands" live in ways that are distinctly different from those of the other families in the locality. Otherwise they would not be thought of locally as they are, as "cultural islanders," for nowhere are they so similar as the members of the majority group that they are recognized only by the statisticians. Incidentally, sociologists and anthropologists — and especially the latter — have spent relatively much more time studying these small, distinct, and highly homogeneous rural groups than they have spent studying the larger contemporary rural civilization that surrounds them. The reason for this seems to be twofold: first, cultural islands are naturally colorful and dramatic in contrast to the larger society in which they are located; and second, it is much easier to make a study of cultural islands than of the dominant society of a region or of the whole nation by regions (the task this section of the present work is attempting to perform).

The second condition under which boundaries of cultural regions are distinct — when sharp changes occur in soils and in topographical factors — hinges upon the great differences that exist in the ways the people live, the crops they grow, the tools they use, and in their group activities, institutions, attitudes, and values. Here and there throughout the country there are such adjacent areas. Examples are the sections in many Texas counties where cotton leaves off and range-livestock begins; or the places in the state of Washington where wheat farming yields to irrigation farming; or the points in Virginia where the prosperity of the rolling limestone Shenandoah Valley ends at the foothills of the mountains on either side. In each of these instances, as in numerous others that could be cited, there are clear demarcations between the two adjacent areas in respect to income, use of tools, range and types of group activities, and the attitudes and values held by the people.

It remains quite correct, however, to emphasize that, except for the cultural island and for the type-farming situations that contrast sharply because of soil and topographical factors, the boundary lines between rural cultural areas are quite indistinct and usually cover a considerable area. The very indistinctness of these boundaries throws into relief three significant facts: first, that cultural areas have cores or hearts; second, that the core or heart of one cultural area differs from the core or heart of all others; and third, that the indistinct boundaries of cultural areas are but the overlapping fringes of two or more distinct core-centered areas.

The concept of the cultural area or region is of basic importance to the social scientist, and to the rural sociologist especially, for it provides a means whereby the spatial aspects of society can be broken down into broadly and relatively homogeneous locality units. This type of delineation makes it possible for scientists to deal with the separate areas as segments of a unified whole — a type of analysis greatly needed to supplement the economic and population analyses that have been done on these same geographic bases, and to supplement and enrich the findings of specific studies that have been made of such subjects as levels of living, leadership, delinquency, family organization, and youth participation in group activities. Studies of cultural areas and of specific subject-matter fields will supplement each other in many important ways. In fact, there is a dawning realization that neither can be done adequately without the other.

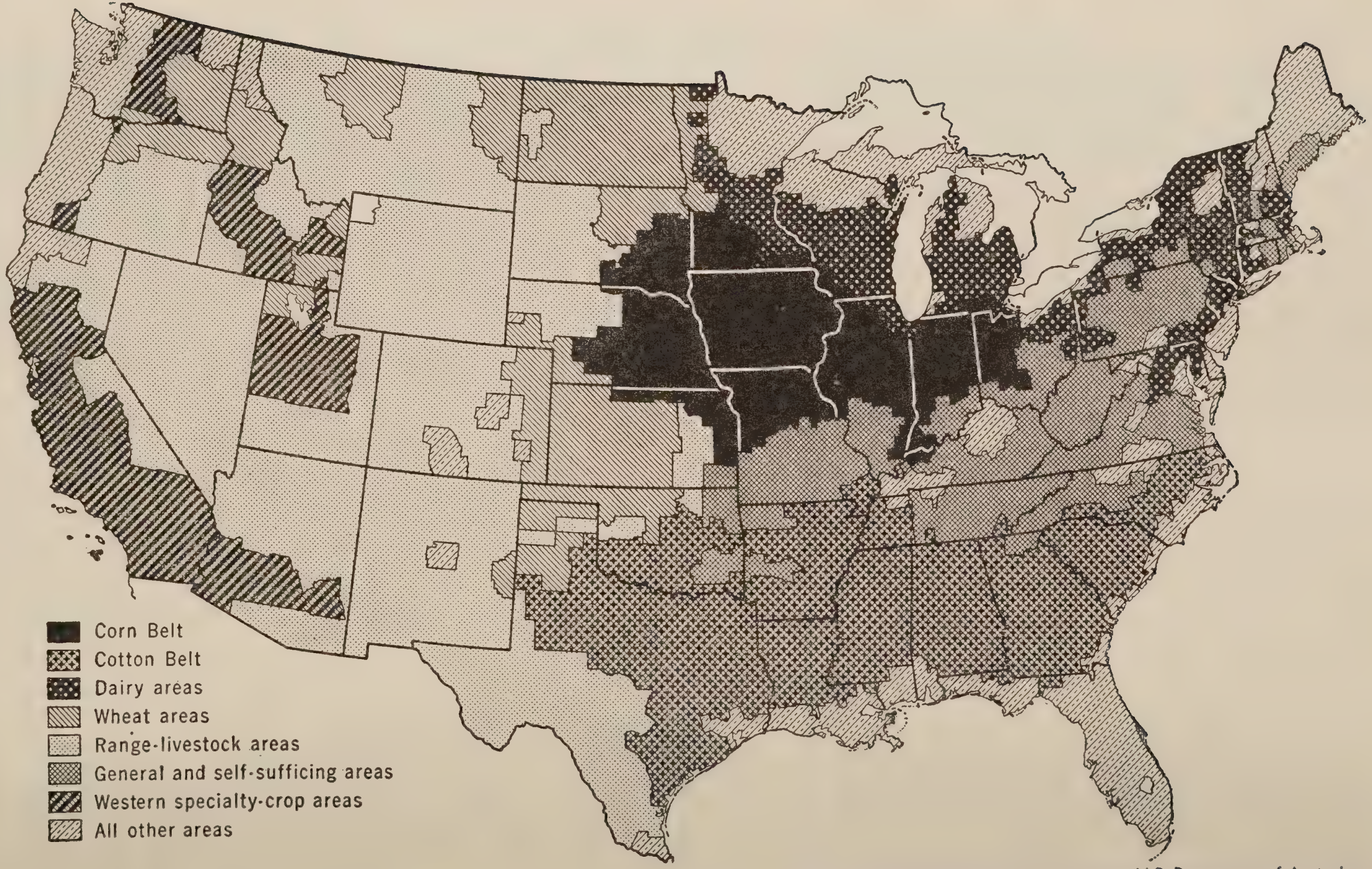
Major Type-Farming Areas as Rural Universes

The major type-farming areas of the country constitute meaningful regional rural universes. Their delineation is the end product of a number of years of careful research by agricultural economists who have attempted to group areas within which exists a marked uniformity of production-economic behavior. And to the information used in this delineation, economists and physical scientists are constantly adding data that are useful in social analysis.

The seven major type-farming areas are especially significant as rural universes, since within each the ways of making a living are roughly uniform.[3] The production of the same farm product or combination of products results in many common activities among the people, and therefore in broadly similar interests, attitudes, and values.

Among the type-farming areas, by their very nature, there are marked differences that have arisen in response to a combination of physical, economic, and historical factors. Some are much less rural than others — in fact, the location of the dairy areas is determined largely by the presence of a concentrated population that provides a ready market for fluid milk and other dairy products. On the other hand, wheat and range-livestock farming are associated with a sparse population. Some farm enterprises are more readily mechanized than others, for machinery can be used more successfully where the fields are large and level, as in the corn belt and wheat areas, than where they are small and irregular, as in the hilly parts of the general and self-sufficing areas. There are also variations owing to differences in the extent to which various farm enterprises have been mechanized, whether because no machine has been invented or because available machines are not being

[3] See map (Fig. 35).


■ Corn Belt
▩ Cotton Belt
▦ Dairy areas
▧ Wheat areas
☐ Range-livestock areas
▦ General and self-sufficing areas
▨ Western specialty-crop areas
▧ All other areas

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 35 REGIONALIZED TYPES OF FARMING IN THE UNITED STATES
(SPECIAL ADAPTATION, 1944)

used for one reason or another. Appropriate machinery has long been available for most farming operations in the corn belt and in the wheat areas, and farm people have desired them and have been in a position to use them. Dairy farming, too, is becoming largely mechanized, although much personal attention to the herd is still required for best results. In contrast, appropriate machines for cotton production are just now being introduced; the rate at which they are adopted will be determined in part by purely economic considerations, and in part by the willingness of plantation owners to make the shift from their traditional use of renters, croppers, and farm wage hands to the use of machines.

Farm tenants are much more prevalent in some major type-farming areas than in others, and high rates of tenancy may have very different causes. In the cotton belt, for instance, the historical fact of slavery is the background for the present tenancy system. But in much of the corn belt and the wheat areas the early settlers secured farms of their own through homestead claims and other means. As a result, in the early decades these areas were characterized by farm ownership. High tenancy rates developed later as a result of the desire of the older operators to retain ownership after retirement from active farming, and of the desire of new operators to make a good living by investing in the more immediate means of production, such as machinery, hogs, and beef cattle. These differing causes of tenancy are related to the character as well as to the volume of farm tenancy. Thus, in all seven of the type-farming areas except the cotton belt and the general and self-sufficing areas, tenant-operated farms are larger than those of the owner-operators.

The way the farm work is done in the various type-farming areas gives each a distinctive quality. In some, such as the general and self-sufficing areas, most of the work is done by the farm family with simple equipment; in others, such as the wheat areas, the corn belt, and the dairy areas, it is done by the farm family with the help of machines; or, as in the Western specialty-crop areas, by a combination of machines and seasonal workers; and in such areas as the cotton belt it may in large part be done by the entire families of small owners, renters, croppers, and wage hands, without machines.

The size of gross farm incomes is determined by all of the above considerations, and also by the amount and type of off-farm work done by farm people. As a result, there are marked differences in income levels, and also in rural levels of living, among the various type-farming areas. These differences are most apparent in such matters as the size and state of repair of farm dwellings, the prevalence of home conveniences and of automobiles, and the upkeep of rural schools and churches.

The routines of work and leisure that are characteristic among the farm people of the different major type-farming areas produce distinctive daily, weekly, seasonal, and annual rhythms in rural life. For both the formal and informal group activities of rural people fit in with their busy and slack-work periods. In some types of farming, such as dairying, farmers have regular daily work throughout the year, while in others, especially wheat and cotton farming, the amount of farm work varies from a peak load during some months of the year to almost none during other months.

The type-farming area also plays a large part in determining the size and the role of the towns it contains. The very appearances of towns reflect the pattern of farm life in the locality. The kinds of farm products shipped out, whether they are processed, and how they are stored, if at all, affect what goes on in the towns. Average farm incomes are also of significance, that is, whether they are high or low; and whether, as in the corn belt, wheat areas, and dairy areas, they are somewhat evenly distributed among the people, or whether, as in the Western specialty-crop areas and the cotton belt, they are very unevenly distributed.

Type-farming (along with population density and socio-economic groupings) is closely associated with differences in the prevalence among farmers of special-interest groups. In some areas there are many crop and livestock associations, while in others there are but few, the difference being largely a reflection of the degree to which the farmers rely on science in their farming operations, the amount of group activity they find it desirable to carry on among themselves, and the extent to which all of the people participate in common organized activities.

Still other differences that exist broadly between major type-farming areas are those involving attitudes and values. In some type-farming situations, for example, a great value is put on frugality as the basis of security, while in others farming that takes risks is considered the only way to make enough in the good years so that the farmer can get through the recurring periods of low yields. In some areas the ownership of the land is much more highly prized than it is in others, for quite naturally the farm people put greatest value on owning land in those parts of the country where the status in the community of landowning families is markedly higher than that of the nonlandowning families. Likewise, the attitudes and values with which rural people regard such things as co-operative effort, public education, maintenance of churches, and neighborly association with one another, vary in important ways with the differing ways of making a living which prevail in the various type-farm areas.

As basic rural universes, the major type-farming areas are cut across here and there by a number of culturally significant forces, such as the New England way of life in the northeastern parts of the dairy areas; the slave-tradition in the older, eastern parts of the cotton belt; the Spanish-American and Indian influences in the southern portions of the range-livestock areas; the Oriental and Mexican patterns in the westernmost portions of the Western specialty-crop areas; the Mormon codes in the central portions of that same generalized type-farming area; the heritages of the many more or less self-conscious European nationality groups in the wheat areas, corn belt, and dairy areas; and of the many other small distinctive groups in one place or another throughout the country. One test of whether or not the major type-farming areas can be considered rural cultural universes is whether or not such dynamic cultural forces as those just named can be reckoned with in the analysis of rural life in the United States by major type-farming areas.

To deal with them centrally would mean incomplete coverage of the rural culture of the nation; to ignore them would be to leave out some of the most distinctive cultural facets of our varied national rural life. In the chapters that follow an attempt is made to keep the type-farming areas, which cover the whole nation, in the center of the analytical description, with only such attention being given to locality situations of special cultural importance as seems warranted in dealing with each type-farming area as a rural universe.

CHAPTER 20

THE COTTON BELT

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER

The Cotton Country

The cotton belt lies in a great crescent stretching from eastern North Carolina across the lower Mississippi basin to Oklahoma and western Texas. In its 690 counties live over three tenths of the nation's farm population. Indeed, nearly as many farm people live in the cotton belt as live in the corn belt, dairy areas, wheat areas, and range-livestock areas combined. The belt is composed of uplands, river bottoms, coastal plains, and the high, dryish plains of Texas and Oklahoma. In the extensive older uplands in the eastern part of the belt, and in some of the uplands west of the Mississippi, much of the land is in second-growth trees, mostly pines. Because of severe soil depletion much of this land was abandoned years ago by farmers. Some land is still being cleared for cultivation in the recently drained areas in the Mississippi bottoms, and there cotton acreage is expanding. Cotton production has also become extensive in the warmer irrigated sections of southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico.[1]

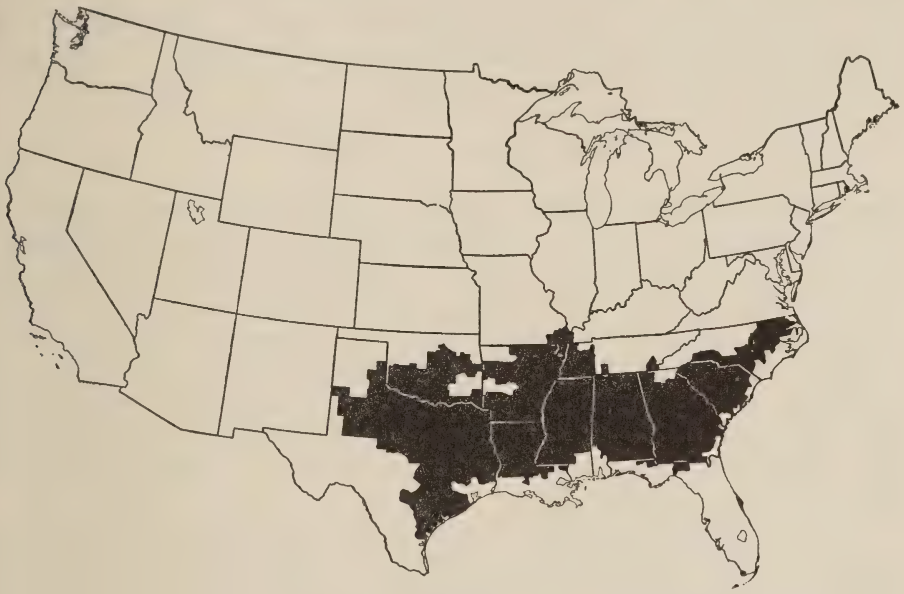
Cotton is a hot-weather plant, and it is the dominant crop in practically all of the country where it is climatically possible to grow it, that is, where the growing season consists of more than two hundred frost-free days, where autumnal rains are not excessive, and where the annual rainfall amounts to over twenty inches. As a matter of fact, no other farm product is so dominant in so high a proportion of the area where it can be grown.

Most cotton is grown with one-horse implements and hand labor. In no other major type-farming region of the country are farm tractors so few and one-horse plows so common. Although in the last fifteen years there has been a relatively larger increase of tractors in the cotton belt, especially in the plains of Texas and Oklahoma, than in any other part of the country, the percentage of farms with tractors is still the lowest of any of the major type-farming regions.

Cotton is grown both on family-owned farms and on plantations operated by tenants and wage hands. In 1945 over half of the 1,736,000 farm operators in the belt were tenants. This includes sharecroppers, who made up two

[1] See map of cotton belt (Fig. 36).

fifths of all tenants. Wherever cotton is grown, and by whatever methods it is produced, however, ways of living that are distinctive to cotton production prevail. Thus it is not uncommon to hear a landlord or tenant speak of his own health, in the language of the cotton grader, as "fair to middlin'," or for a lawyer or doctor in his office in a brick building downtown to mop his forehead on a hot July afternoon and say: "Good cotton weather, isn't it?" Indeed, the cotton belt has often been referred to as the cotton kingdom, with King Cotton ruling the lives of the farmers and of the townspeople who sell farm supplies and provide other services to cotton growers. The economic and social activities of all types of people – plantation owners, small owner-operators, tenants, hired workers, and many townspeople – are scheduled by the busy seasons in spring and fall, by the brief slack-work period in late summer, and by the longer slack-work period in winter. The people in the cotton belt have grown up with cotton; they know how to produce and sell it; they find it tedious and expensive, and sometimes painful, to shift away from it. They cherish the traditional activities that fit in with its busy and slack-work seasons. In the cotton country all types of people like to think of themselves as unhurried and hospitable, like to entertain their friends, and like to have time to stop and talk with a neighbor or sit in the shade if they have a mind to.



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 36 COTTON BELT

The cotton belt, characterized as it is by the long-time production of a commercial crop with simple tools and hand labor, has an excess of population and labor supply in relation to available land and capital resources and the customary way of using these resources. Thus the belt, which, compared with all other areas of the nation, has the highest proportion of its total population living on farms, also has the highest farm tenancy rate and the lowest rural-farm level of living index. In addition, it has the highest percentage of nonwhites in its population. But economic and social conditions in the cotton belt, although often institutionalized, are not static. The cotton acreage is decreasing, the yield per acre is increasing, as are also soil-building crops, live-at-home farming, livestock production, and farm mechanization. In the meantime the number of farmers, especially tenants, is decreasing. The cities, some of which are great centers of steel and oil, continue to grow, and many lines of industry and trade continue to expand. These agricultural changes and industrial developments are not occurring at an even rate throughout the belt, but they are of importance to the whole cotton country.

Cotton Farmers at Work

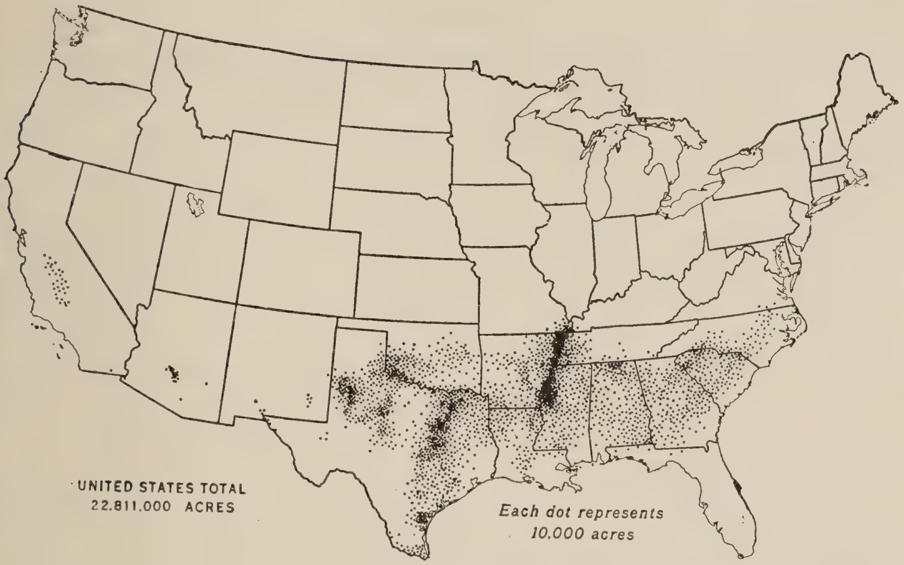
Nearly nine tenths of the nation's cotton is produced in the 690 counties in the cotton belt that, as delineated for this discussion, lies east of the Rockies.[2] Methods of producing cotton range from plantation farming in the more fertile lands of the older settled areas, where as high as nine tenths of all farm families are tenants (mostly Negro sharecroppers); to subsistence farming by owner-operators (mostly whites) in the thin-soil and hilly areas; to the large-scale farming by operator families in the Southwestern plains, who cultivate large acreages of cotton with multiple-row machinery and either harvest it with mechanical strippers or rely on migrant Mexican-Americans to do the picking.

The plantation, which early set the pattern of human relations in the heart of the Old South, has had an influence far greater than its geographic extent. The percentage of farms operated by tenants closely parallels the extent to which farming is carried on by the plantation system. In the belt as a whole over 53 per cent of all farm operators in 1945 were tenants, and nearly two fifths of these were sharecroppers. But in areas where the plantation economy is relatively absent and subsistence farming dominates, the tenancy rate is usually much lower than in the plantation counties, and sharecroppers make up a much smaller percentage of those who are tenants. Thus, in the newer cotton sections of Texas and Oklahoma, the tenancy rate is lower and fewer of the tenants are sharecroppers than in the older eastern plantation sections.

Most cotton production — and particularly that on plantations — is carried on with borrowed money. For cotton tenancy, especially sharecropping, makes it possible for families with little or no property or credit resources to enter and remain in agriculture. The sharecropper has no expenses for upkeep of land or buildings, pays no direct taxes, and spends little or nothing on the tenant house he occupies. He is furnished work stock and equipment, and is advanced food and clothing for that part of the year during which he is engaged in producing the crop. Many landowners, large and small, also finance their cotton production with borrowed money, which in this case involves putting up their chattels as security or placing a mortgage on their land. These debt pressures upon tenants and landowners put a premium on the production of the cash crop of cotton. As a result, cotton accounts for more than three fourths of the total value of all the crops produced in the big plantation areas of the Mississippi Delta and in some of the newer cotton-producing sections of the Texas-Oklahoma high plains, whereas it usually accounts for much less than half of the total value of the crops produced in the older upland subsistence parts of the belt, where the plantation system is least in evidence. In fact, cotton production has for decades been shifting from the Southeast to the Southwest, with the production west of the Mississippi River first surpassing that to the east in 1920. By 1939, nearly three-fifths of the cotton crop was from west of the Mississippi River; in 1945, however, the proportion from the West was only a little over half, because of the greater increase of yields per acre in the East. See Table 51.

---

[2] See map of cotton acreage, 1939 (Fig. 37).



Scurce: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 37 COTTON

ACREAGE, 1939

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.

What are some of these other crops produced in the cotton belt? Although corn acreage equals or exceeds that of cotton in many parts of the belt, the corn is usually consumed by the livestock used by the cotton-growing families themselves, and so does not constitute a rival crop. Sorghum is grown extensively in the Southwestern plains, while tobacco has long been of importance in the easternmost parts of the belt. Rice is grown in some parts of Arkansas and Louisiana; commercial fruits and vegetables are raised in scattered localities; and dairy and beef cattle are produced in certain spots, especially in central prairie sections of Mississippi and Alabama and in the western parts of the belt adjacent to the range-livestock country. Self-sufficient agriculture is most pronounced where plantation farming is least in evidence, and vice versa. But while these various agricultural enterprises affect cotton production in one way or another, in most instances they still occupy a secondary position to it, and so have altered rather than displaced the cotton pattern of farming.

Broadly speaking, the cotton belt has the most eroded land, the least machinery, and the lowest farm incomes of any commercial farming area in the country. The red and yellow soils of the eastern portions of the cotton belt were, on the whole, originally less fertile and more erosive than soils in most other farming sections of the country. Now, except for the wide stretch of Delta area along the Mississippi River, and the less extensive bottom lands of the other larger rivers, erosion ranges from moderate to severe throughout practically all of the cotton belt. All across the belt recurrent droughts appear, and floods are a serious problem in many sections, although in recent years the great levee system of the lower Mississippi has prevented flooding in that area. In fact, the National Resources Board has classified approximately one fourth of the land area of the eight principal cotton-producing states as unprofitable for cultivation. One result is that in 1945 cotton had a commercial fertilizer bill of nearly $50,000,000, with most of this fertilizer being used on the eroded uplands east of the Mississippi alluvial plain and immediately west of it. Relatively little fertilizer is used on cotton land in the river bottoms, and practically none is used west of the thirty-inch-rainfall line, where productivity is limited by lack of rain. The high plains possess two advantages in that the dry weather holds the weevil

TABLE 51

Cotton Acreage, Number of Bales Harvested, and Average Bales per Acre, 30-Year Intervals, Census Years 1850–1945 *

		1850	1880	1910	1940	1945
UNITED STATES						
Acres	1,000	†	14,480	32,044	22,811	18,962
Bales	1,000	1,975	5,755	10,649	11,481	11,838
Bales per acre			.40	.33	.50	.62
East of Mississippi River						
Acres	1,000	†	10,327	16,929	8,909	7,408
Bales	1,000	1,733	3,796	6,537	4,999	5,763
Bales per acre			.37	.39	.56	.78
West of Mississippi River						
Acres	1,000	†	4,153	15,115	13,902	11,554
Bales	1,000	242	1,959	4,112	6,482	6,075
Bales per acre			.47	.27	.47	.53
Per cent of Total Acreage						
East of the Miss. River		—	71.3	52.8	39.1	39.1
West of the Miss. River		—	28.7	47.2	60.9	60.9
Per cent of Total Bales						
East of Miss. River		87.7	66.0	61.4	43.5	48.7
West of Miss. River		12.3	34.0	38.6	56.5	51.3

* U.S. Census. † Not available.

in check, and the sandy, rolling land can be readily cultivated with tractor-powered machinery.

Hand labor is traditional in most of the cotton belt, and has long been accompanied by small farming units, and by free housing given by the landowners to wage hands and tenant farmers. Since cotton was picked by hand, and enough labor was on the farm, or at least in the locality, throughout the year to take care of that peak work season, there has been little incentive to mechanize the planting and cultivation of the crop in the older plantation sections of the belt. To date the only extensive use of farm machinery that has occurred in the cotton belt is in west Texas and Oklahoma, the newest parts of the belt, where nonwhites and sharecroppers are fewest, and where the landowners have put the least value on supervising other people's work and the most value on work itself. Thus, in 1945 about 30 per cent (approximately the national average) of the farmers in Oklahoma and Texas had tractors, while only 7 per cent or less in the remainder of the cotton belt had them. For the last few seasons mechanical cotton pickers have been used successfully on a demonstration farm near Clarksdale, Mississippi, and on many other plantations in the Delta, while two-row strippers have become rather common in the plains areas of Texas and Oklahoma. Other developments likely to speed up the use of these mechanical pickers include improvements in ginning equipment, the cross-cultivation of cotton, and the eradication of weeds with multiple-row flame throwers. See Table 52 for decrease of farmers in cotton belt from 1940 to 1945. But except in the Plains the mechanization of cotton production is still in its beginnings. It now seems likely that a great expansion in the use of machines will take place in the next few years.

TABLE 52

*Number of Farm Operators in the 690 Counties in the Cotton Belt by Tenure in 1940 and 1945, and Percentage Change from 1940 to 1945 **

Item	Number of Farm Operators		Percentage Change
	1940	1945	1940–1945
Total	1,814,849	1,736,000	−4.3
Full Owners & Managers	626,590	701,000	11.9
Part Owners	115,390	111,000	−3.8
Tenants			
Total	1,072,869	924,000	−13.9
Croppers	440,240	365,000	−17.1
Other Tenants	632,629	559,000	−11.6

Minus sign (−) means decrease.

* U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Low farm incomes are a corollary to the production of cotton with simple tools and hand processes. In 1939 the value of farm products was under $600 for 60 per cent of all cotton farmers, and over $4,000 for less than 2 per cent; in the prosperous year of 1944 the value of the products of 24 per cent was under $600, and over $4,000 for 7 per cent. Practically all of the largest farm incomes belong to plantation owners, while most of the smallest ones go to tenants, although the incomes of many small owners do not rise far above the average for tenants. With the exception of parts of the Texas-Oklahoma plains, the level-of-living index for practically all counties in the cotton belt is below the national average. Many of the lowest levels are in areas where the plantation system is strong, or where it has been strong and is now in decline. It is the numerous tenant families in these plantation areas that pull the average down. Tenant houses are usually small, often unpainted, in a poor state of repair, and without modern conveniences. In addition, educational attainments among tenants are low, cash incomes are small, and diets are often poor.

The people in the cotton belt, white as well as Negro, are almost all native-born – in 1940 only eight out of every thousand were foreign-born. Most of the forebears of the whites came to the cotton belt at least four generations ago, the majority coming from northern Europe, especially the British Isles, with smaller numbers from France and Germany. The people of English backgrounds have always been predominant among the white people of the cotton belt, except in southern and central Louisiana, where most of the people are of French ancestry. There are a few small cultural islands, mostly in Texas and Oklahoma, of Germans, Czechs, or Italians who came in about fifty years ago. The English majority element of the white population consists of two broad groups: those whose ancestors settled along the Atlantic seaboard in Virginia and to the south of it, and who developed early plantation farming; and those whose ancestors were the Scotch-Irish who came down the valleys from the hill country of Virginia and Pennsylvania into the Piedmont sections of the South Atlantic states, and who later used slaves, although the vast majority of white farmers in both groups did not own slaves.

As slave-plantation farming expanded in the older, eastern parts of the belt between 1800 and 1850, there were three important population developments: (1) the increase of Negro slaves; (2) the movement of numerous white families out of the slave-plantation areas, which often resulted in an actual decrease of the white population as the Negro population increased; and (3) the movement of planters to the Southwest in order to get more land and to find fresher land upon which to grow cotton.

The forebears of the Negro population of the cotton belt were practically all brought in as slaves prior to 1860. They were from various parts of west and central Africa, but they were so thoroughly intermixed while being put aboard ships and distributed in America that no distinctive African group survivals of any importance are now found. Nevertheless, the presence of the Negro as a slave, and later as a freedman, has influenced all phases of life in the cotton country – economic, social, religious, political – and has had a profound effect upon the arts and literature, especially music and humor. The Negro has been closely identified with cotton-plantation farming. Indeed, the vast majority of all the Negro farm operators in the country live in the cotton belt. One fifth of them are landowners; the other four fifths, tenants. Altogether they constitute slightly more than one third of the rural-farm population of the belt and are most numerous in the big-plantation areas of the Mississippi Delta, south central Alabama, central Georgia, and the eastern parts of the Carolinas.

About a third of the Indians in the United States also live in the cotton belt, mainly in Oklahoma. Many Mexican Americans reside in Texas, and each year Mexican migrants pick cotton throughout the Southwest, with a smaller number doing so in the Mississippi Delta.

Cotton production dictates an annual cycle of activities connected with the planting, cultivating, harvesting, and marketing of the crop. There are differences of a few weeks in planting time or in the picking time in the southern and the northern edges of the cotton belt, but the work rhythms are similar. The first busy season comes in spring, when the ground is prepared, planted, and cultivated, which includes hoeing, with women and children of the lower-income families usually doing field work. This busy season, which is over by midsummer, is followed by a slack-work period, during which there is an increase in informal association and in church and school activities. By early fall the picking season is in full swing, and all available hands, often including the children of school age, work in the fields. Except for the migrant Mexican Americans in the western parts of the belt, the cotton is picked by resident whites and Negroes, some of whom are recruited in the local towns and cities and hauled daily to the fields. The picking season lasts but a few weeks in localities where cotton makes up a small proportion of the total crop acreage, while in the areas with high cotton acreages and good yields, such as the Delta, the picking season, which is often interrupted by rains, may last into the winter. After the harvest, landlords settle with their tenants, and a little later both landlords and tenants begin to make arrangements for the next year's crop. Between the last picking and the preparation of the ground for the next crop there is another, and longer, slack-work period, during which there is rather widespread underemployment.

The work rhythms of the region have other important effects on the mode of life. Since the demands of the cotton plant are greatest at the same time at which other crops should be cared for, diversification has lagged and gardens have often been neglected. Moreover, the peak needs for hand labor have put a premium on the family as a work unit, and have resulted in all members of the family doing field work. Another distinctive thing about labor in cotton production is that people who are acquainted with one another, often groups of families, work together in the fields at hoeing and picking times, especially in the plantation areas. In the production of cotton the peak-work periods do not partake of the deadline crisis operations nearly so much as they do in the production of many other crops. Cotton chopping and picking are commonly extended over considerable periods of time without serious crop losses. The cotton plant is not delicate or demanding — it can be grown and harvested leisurely, and when cotton is in the bale it can be left out in the rain and wind for months without serious damage.

The greatest differences in the peak-work and slack-work seasons occur in the Piedmont and Delta areas, where traditional hand methods of production are still largely relied upon. The greatest differences of all occur on the sharecropper farms, where over two thirds of the work of the entire year is done in the five months of April, May, June, September, and October. The differences are not so great among the cotton farmers of Texas and Oklahoma, particularly in the Southern plains where cotton production is most completely mechanized and sorghum grain is an important supplementary cash crop. Cotton farms, anywhere in the belt, with appreciable livestock, tobacco, fruits and vegetables, or other non-cotton-farm enterprises, usually show decidely smaller differences between the peak- and slack-work periods than exist on farms devoted primarily to cotton.

The very appearance of the trading centers, towns, and cities of the cotton country are influenced in numerous ways by cotton production. Cotton gins, usually housed in corrugated iron buildings, are to be seen at crossroads communities throughout the belt, while nearly every village and town has cotton warehouses, and most of the larger towns have cottonseed-oil mills. The location and growth of most of the more important cities in and near the cotton belt — Charleston, Augusta, Atlanta, Macon, Montgomery, Memphis, New Orleans, Houston, and Galveston — are related to cotton, for they serve as centers for farmers' supplies and for the marketing of cotton. In recent decades the expansion of cotton textiles has been a main factor in the growth of cities in the eastern portion of the belt, especially in the Piedmont section. In the western half of the belt the population and wealth of many cities, especially Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Houston, and Baton Rouge, have been swelled by industries concerned with the extraction, refinement, and distribution of oil and natural gas. Some landowning cotton farmers have, in fact, become rich from oil and gas royalties. One does not usually see cotton being grown among active oil wells, "for," as one Oklahoma farmer put it, "it's hard to keep your mind on the plow, when oil is coming up from down under." In northern Alabama the juxtaposition of the basic ingredients for the making of steel has resulted in the rapid growth of Birmingham, which, like Atlanta, Memphis, Dallas, Houston, and New Orleans, is becoming more important each year as a center for regional industry and branch offices of national concerns.

However, most counties in the cotton belt, which is the most rural type-farming region in the nation, have no industries or large urban community to attract branch offices, and no known oil down under (although recent drillings in Mississippi have made another large group of cotton farmers begin to get a faraway look in their eyes). Thus, taking the belt as a whole, nonfarm work opportunities are relatively fewer than they are in most of the other major type-farming areas, and nearly 50 per cent below the average for the entire country, with nonfarm work opportunities being most limited in the plantation sections. In the Piedmont some farm incomes are supplemented by employment in textile mills; in areas where there is still timber, by sawmill and pulpwood work; in the western parts of the belt, by labor around gas wells and oil lines; and in nearly every county, by the irregular and casual employment opportunities available in the local towns.

Groups, Group Relationships, and Organizations

Throughout the cotton belt the organized activities and informal associations of the farm people, and also of many town and city dwellers, are profoundly influenced by the annual cycle of the production and marketing of cotton. Growers' co-operative associations, some attempts to form farm-labor and tenant organizations, and the operation and seasonal activities of schools and churches, all show the effects of the cotton economy. The towns reflect the fluctuating tide that flows through them as farm people come in during the busy and slack-work seasons, and as cotton travels the work cycles and channels of trade, progressing from cotton seed and farmers' supplies to cotton cloth and cotton's by-products. Moreover, throughout the cotton belt there is a close relationship between plantation farming and the organizational and institutional life of people, for the social organization associated with plantation farming has a marked tendency to reach into nonplantation areas and to persist in old-plantation areas after plantation farming has declined.

Organizations that center specifically around cotton include the National Cotton Council and the Delta Council, a subarea organization. In 1944, cotton marketing and purchasing co-operative associations numbered around 490, with over 230,000 members (about one eighth of the farmers of the belt) and a volume of business of over $155,000,000. Most of these associations operated gins only and were in the western parts of the belt. The Farm Bureau, the most widespread and influential farmers' organization in the belt, is a potent force in determining policies related to cotton. And, centering around Memphis, the National Farm Labor Union, which has advocated higher wages for chopping and picking, has a membership consisting of farm laborers, tenants, and small owners.

The schools and churches are conditioned by the work rhythms of cotton production, by the wide range in size of farm incomes, and by the biracial structure of the population. In the older-plantation areas, including the Delta, where most of the workers live in the open country, the schools and churches of the rural Negroes are scattered, more or less by plantations, over the whole countryside. The white schools are usually large consolidated units and, along with most of the churches, are located in the towns and villages. In the upland areas, which are usually occupied by small white owners or renters, churches and schools were early established throughout the open country. But in recent years some of the churches have been abandoned as people left the farms, and many of the small district schools have been consolidated into larger central schools. In the more recently settled western parts of the belt, where most of the rural people are white and where farms are larger but less characterized by plantation operations, schools and churches are usually in the trading centers. Most of the rural Negro schools in the cotton belt are of the one- or two-teacher type, and are often conducted in churches and lodge halls, especially in the plantation areas, where the proportion of the colored population is greatest and where farm tenancy rates are highest. Throughout the belt most of the rural Negro schools and many of the smaller rural white schools have a six-week session in midsummer, so that the children will have no school to interfere with the picking of cotton in the fall. Where there is no school vacation for picking, many children of tenant and small-owner families attend irregularly until the cotton is picked.

Although the number of rural churches is declining, the church continues to be the principal integrating force in most rural neighborhoods. Both whites and Negroes are predominantly Protestant, with the Baptist denomination ranking first in membership, and the Methodist second. Most of the ministers who serve these rural churches receive small salaries and often serve two or more small churches. Once-a-month preaching services are common. Moreover, many of the Negro preachers, and some of the white ones, are farmers. The French in Louisiana are largely Catholic, as are the Mexican Americans in the Southwest and some of the central and southern Europeans in the scattered settlements in that area.

Throughout the cotton belt there is a close relationship between the economic and social position of farm families and their form of land tenure. The landowners, locality by locality all the way across the belt, have larger incomes and higher social status than the tenants and wage hands. The differences between the living conditions of the various segments of the population are greatest in the plantation areas of the Old South, where tenancy rates are highest, and least in the plains section of Texas and Oklahoma, where tractor-powered machinery is used on family-operated farms. Cutting across tenure groupings are the racial groupings, which everywhere are defined in terms of separateness (separate institutions, organizations, and activities), with each racial group tending to have in each community something that approximates an upper, middle, and lower class. In scattered sections along the northern and western edges of the belt, from the Carolinas to western Texas, there are white communities that permit no Negro residents, while at the other extreme there are here and there throughout the belt a few all-Negro farming communities and towns. Nationality and race relations in the southwestern part of the belt are between whites, Indians, Mexican Americans, and Negroes, with many of the Indians, especially in Oklahoma, living on about the same general social and legal plane as the Anglo-whites. A few Indians have become wealthy from oil royalties. As for the Mexican Americans, wherever they are numerous as residents or migrant workers, there are usually separate schools and distinct social cleavages between them and the Anglo-whites on the one hand and the Negroes on the other.

The demands of cotton production have also made an imprint on the family life of nearly everyone in the cotton belt. The women and children of the wage workers, tenants, and the small landowners usually work in the fields in the busy seasons, and because of the pressing demand for hand workers, large families are often considered an economic asset among migrants and lower-income resident families. But since cotton production requires many hands only during hoeing and picking seasons, many colored women in the open country, and in the towns, too, have been available during a large part of the year for work as cooks, maids, and washerwomen. This availability of local household help has facilitated the ease with which the housewife of the upper-income white family has extended the hospitality of her home to friends and the readiness of the wife of the middle-income family to employ a cook or a washerwoman. Sometimes, too, the wife of the small farmer or low-income townsman has been enabled to leave her household work to a Negro maid while she supplements the family income at a textile mill or town store. Domestic employment has often meant that the Negro mother left her children in the care of a grandmother or other relative.

During the short "lay-by" period of late summer and the idle months of the winter, there is much visiting at the homes of neighbors and kinsfolk, at the crossroad stores, and in the towns. In summer there are revival meetings, family reunions, barbecues, fish fries, baseball games, singing conventions, watermelon cuttings, and fishing. And around settlement time come county fairs and carnivals in the towns and villages, and gala cotton festivals in a number of the larger cities. In winter there is hunting, and for most of the lower-income families a lot of sitting around the house between odd jobs and occasional days of hired work. Few organizational activities take place in winter because of unfavorable weather conditions, the bad roads in many areas, and the tradition of little group activity during this period.

The town is of special significance to the cotton farmers, since it is at one and the same time a place to obtain needed supplies with cash or credit, to market the crop, to secure all sorts of services, and to get together during each week end. In the cotton belt "going to town" on Saturday afternoon has long been a social occasion. Cotton farmers, going to town primarily to be with each other, stay through the afternoon and often into the evening, because they like to visit unhurriedly on the streets, in the stores, at the courthouse, and in and around the hot-dog and pop stands. All these places are then alive with men, women, and children coming and going in gay clothes, their talk and laughter often competing with an old nickelodeon here and a newer and louder juke box there.

Throughout the cotton belt the county is the most important local governmental unit (in Louisiana it is the parish). The people of all groups are county-conscious, as shown by their customary way of identifying themselves as residents of a particular county; by the fact that the courthouse, which is often the most imposing building in the county, occupies the central position in the county-seat town; and by the public esteem in which county officials are held in most cotton-belt communities. Members of leading farm families are prominent among the officials of most counties in the cotton country. The officials are the chosen representatives of a generally small electorate that is composed almost wholly of upper- and middle-income white families. The offices of the county commissioners, the county judge, sheriff, clerk of court, ordinary, tax collector, school superintendent, and welfare officer are important bulwarks in maintaining the traditional way of life in the cotton country, for it is these officers who have the police power and operate the courts, who collect and distribute taxes, and who in general determine the range and quality of public services. The sheriff's office is often especially prized in those states where the county taxes are collected on a commission basis, and where the peace officers and courts operate on a fee system. Moreover, in recent years the long-time importance of the county – and of the county-seat town as its capital – has been further enhanced by its use as the administrative unit for the federal-state agricultural, welfare, and war activities, with the local representatives of these activities practically always having their offices in the county-seat town, often in the courthouse.

Townships or militia districts, as they are variously called, are of comparatively little concern to the people, although they are generally used as voting precincts, tax-listing units, the jurisdictions of local justices of peace, and in recent years sometimes as rural consolidated white school districts. Broadly speaking, the township lines, which were never very strong in most of the cotton belt, are becoming less distinct, whereas the county lines, which have always been pronounced, may be becoming stronger.

County and local community leadership in the cotton belt usually comes from the older landowning families in the white upper- and middle-income groups. The Negroes and a majority of the lower-income whites are usually not active in general community affairs. Within their own communities Negroes participate actively in churches, and in burial and benevolent societies, which serve a mutual-aid function and are important in their social life. Activities involving both races are usually carried on by the white leaders who stay in touch with liaison colored leaders in whom both racial groups have confidence.

Attitudes and Values of the People

Throughout the cotton country pride is taken in fine fields of growing cotton and in high yields. In some of the best cotton areas, and especially in the Mississippi Delta, landowners have a deep conviction about the suitability of the land and of the climate for cotton. "This is cotton country," they say. Pride is also expressed in the progress being made in crop diversification, soil conservation, and live-at-home farming. This is of particular significance in view of the fact that the leadership in the cotton country has for years been torn between two conflicting attitudes – despair over the plight of the cotton farmer, and pride in the magnitude of the region's output of cotton.

Ownership of land is an important symbol of prestige throughout the belt, and especially in the parts of it where the plantation system is, or has been, strong. Many people in the cotton country, particularly members of old landed families, take great pride in their ancestry. Size of income and size of farming operations are also important determiners of status everywhere in the belt, but it requires a much longer time for these factors to place a family in a top or bottom place in the communities in the older eastern parts of the belt than it does in the newer western parts.

In response to fluctuating yields and prices, landowners and tenants in most sections of the belt have acquired something of the speculator's attitude toward cotton production. Although the ownership and use of mechanized equipment is a new and growing value among cotton farmers, traditional hand labor remains common. It is generally assumed by everyone that the able-bodied men, women, and children of the farm-labor families will be available for field work at prevailing wages during the busy seasons, and that when tenant and low-income landowning families have finished with their own crop, they, too, will be ready for hire by farmers who are seeking labor. It is where self-sufficient farming has accompanied cotton production that year-round industrial employment and off-farm work between crops are more highly valued.

Everywhere in the belt the church is highly respected and is considered an indispensable institution by both whites and Negroes, Protestants and Catholics. The annual revival meetings among the Protestants and the church fairs among the Catholics have a fixed place in the religious values of the people, and are also of social importance to them. Education is likewise generally valued highly, although many of the smaller farmers, especially the Negro sharecroppers, often do not keep their children in school regularly. The consolidation of white schools is now widely accepted, but here and there attempts at consolidation continue to be effectively opposed by parents who are not willing to give up their small local schools.

Living at one's own pace and having time to rest and see friends are deep-seated values among all elements of the population of the cotton country. Thus the people, irrespective of race or class position, are unhurried and personal in their dealings with one another. They like best the music and humor and the literature and art forms of their own section. In their great diversity these include the lively gospel songs of the singing conventions and the Negro spirituals; black-faced minstrels and jazz bands; Uncle Remus's Stories and Arkansas' backwoods tales; magazine articles and books by Archibald Rutledge and Stark Young, who romanticize the Old South, and by William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell, who pinprick and sledge-hammer the mint-julep-and-magnolia tradition. They also like the works of Howard Odum and Rupert Vance, who plead for a constructive use of the South's great human and natural resources; of Roark Bradford and David Cohen, who look inside the lives of the landless Negro group; of Booker T. Washington and Richard Wright, who let the white man know something of what the Negroes think; of Lillian Smith and James Saxon Childers, who utilize psychology to help explain Southern personality and human relations; and of T. S. Stribling and William Alexander Percy, who with artistic expression make memorable the real and imaginary characters and conditions of the cotton country. The variety in the cotton belt's topography, types of farming, and population elements, and in the points of view that exist among its people, is matched by the differences between its two most famous motion pictures, *The Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind,* and between its best known plays, *Tobacco Road* and *Green Pastures.* In short, some worship the past, some extol the status quo, some analyze the present situation, and some look forward to a new and better day. But all are part and parcel of the cotton belt, of its life and way of living.

Major Trends in the Cotton Belt

The cotton belt is undergoing important economic changes, many of which have been in process for a number of years. Cotton production continues to shift from the older cotton-growing areas in the Southeast to the Mississippi Delta and the Southwest; acreages have declined considerably in the past two decades, but the yields per acre have increased sufficiently – particularly in the Delta and the better cotton areas of the Southeast – to compensate in large part for the acreage decline; mechanization is increasing rapidly; and crop diversification, livestock farming, and production of home-grown foods are receiving greater emphasis. Along with these changes there has been an increase in the size of farm units and a decrease in the number of farm operators. Accompanying these developments in the more strictly economic aspects of the belt's farm life have been important changes in its population, its group life, and its institutions.

TABLE 53

*Percentage Change of Farmers in Eight Principal Cotton States by Race and Tenure from 1930 to 1945 **

State	White and Non-White				White				Non-White			
			Tenants				Tenants				Tenants	
	Total	Owners†	Croppers‡	Other Tenants	Total	Owners†	Croppers‡	Other Tenants	Total	Owners†	Croppers‡	Other Tenants
UNITED STATES	−7	10	−42	−25	−4	11	−54	−24	−25	§	−31	−33
All 16 Southern States	−11	20	−42	−29	−10	22	−54	−28	−25	4	−31	−33
8 Principal Cotton States	−17	24	−47	−32	−11	28	−63	−30	−28	8	−35	−35
South Carolina	−6	23	−22	−22	−2	27	−40	−23	−11	12	−12	−22
Georgia	−12	29	−41	−16	−8	31	−51	−19	−19	11	−30	−10
Alabama	−13	25	−52	−22	−5	27	−60	−10	−28	15	−42	−35
Mississippi	−16	23	−28	−34	−7	27	−53	−27	−22	12	−20	−39
Arkansas	−18	23	−50	−34	−9	26	−60	−33	−36	§	−44	−37
Louisiana	−20	22	−49	−34	−9	24	−65	−26	−33	12	−41	−41
Oklahoma	−19	26	−88	−39	−15	32	−87	−37	−51	−22	−92	−57
Texas	−22	24	−77	−39	−17	26	−79	−37	−47	6	−73	−52

Minus sign (−) denotes decrease.

* U.S. Census of Agriculture.
† Full owners, part owners, and managers.
‡ South only.
§ Less than one-tenth of 1 per cent.

The trends toward mechanization, diversification, and larger farm units have already had important influences upon tenure and population adjustments. In fact, the number of tenants in all parts of the cotton belt, and especially in western Texas and Oklahoma, where mechanization has proceeded farthest, have declined sharply since 1930. As may be seen in Table 53, this decline was greatest among the sharecroppers and the nonwhite tenants. One of the most significant long-time population changes in the cotton belt has been the steady out-migration of Negroes. In 1940 nearly one fifth of the Negroes who had been born in the eight principal cotton states were living outside of them, and additional large numbers had moved from the farms and small towns to the growing urban centers within these states.

This migration of Negroes from cotton farms, which has been going on for over three quarters of a century, became extensive in the World War I period, continued through the 1920's and 1930's, and reached another peak during World War II.

The movement of Negroes, and also of whites, away from farms and small towns during World War II accelerated the trend toward increased mechanization of farms, which once begun is likely to expand rapidly if cotton can be produced more cheaply that way. If mechanization occurs rapidly and there is a dearth of nonfarm employment opportunities, serious unemployment and other maladjustments may be expected, for the rate of population increase in the cotton belt remains high.

Some changes in group life, institutions, and in the organized way of doing things are also taking place. The programs of the Extension Service, agricultural colleges, FHA, SCS, and REA, in their efforts to increase live-at-home farming and scientific farm practices, including the establishment of one-variety cotton in ginning communities, have led to increased organizational activities among farmers in matters related to their immediate well-being.

The trading centers — and especially the county seat towns — have in recent years become of greater and greater importance to cotton farmers as schools have been consolidated and as federal-state agricultural and welfare programs have developed and established the headquarters of their local representatives in or near the county courthouses.

The traditional racial patterns of the cotton country have also undergone some changes. The migration of Negroes from the farms has somewhat lessened the pressure of numbers on economic opportunities. The slow but gradual decline of the Negro proportion of the population in nearly all parts of the cotton belt has been generally accompanied by waning tensions.

In all parts of the cotton belt the more articulate farmers are concerned about the future of cotton. Although improved farming practices are on the increase, the vast majority of the cotton farmers still do most of their work by hand and with one- and two-mule tools, produce cotton largely with borrowed money, and have little opportunity for renumerative employment during the annual slack-work periods. Tied up with these difficulties are their uncertainties about cotton itself. Can it compete with cotton from other countries and with other fibers? And, if so, under what arrangements and at what price levels? Many farmers are now hoping to meet the situation by reducing the cost of production through mechanization, some by shifting to noncotton crops, and others by leaving the farm for the city. Many of the leaders would like above all else to see enough expansion of nonagricultural employment within the belt to provide work for those who may leave cotton farms. But whether cotton is produced by traditional methods or by mechanization, it does not now seem likely that in the near future sufficient nonagricultural employment will be developed in the area to meet the needs of the people. The alternatives, in view of the limited land resources, seem to be submarginal living for numerous families or a continuation of the large-scale migration to other regions.

CHAPTER 21

THE CORN BELT

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

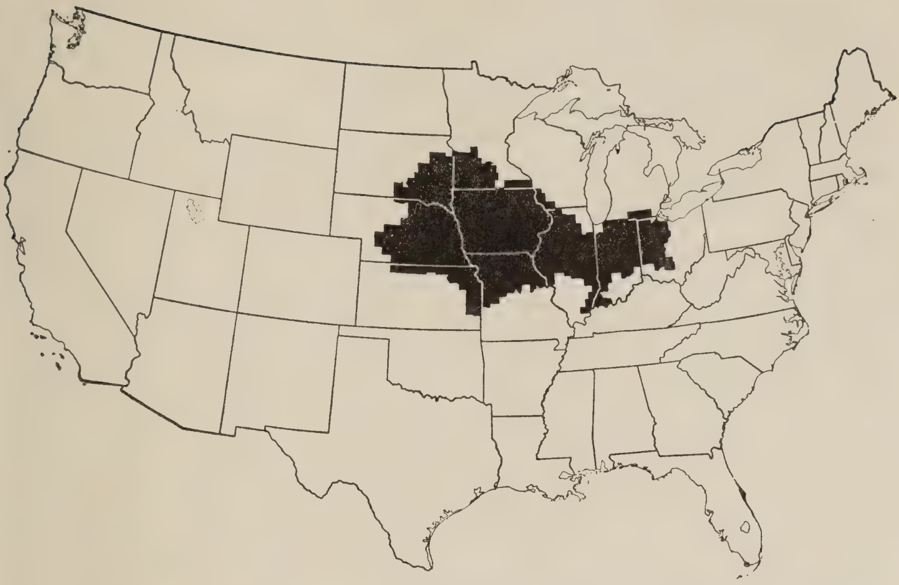
The Corn Country

THE corn belt is the heart of what is known in broad terms as the great Middle West. Consisting of 469 counties lying within the eleven states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, its core is in the first four of these states, while only in Iowa are all counties classified as belonging to the belt. Included in the 469 counties of this great type-farming region are 900,000 farms, most of them commercial, family-sized, and family-operated. Although many crops other than corn, and many kinds of animals other than hogs, are produced in the region, it is quite commonly referred to as the corn-hog country. Not all of the people who live in the corn belt make their living by farming, nor do all of them live on farms. As a mattter of fact, of the slightly more than thirteen million people who live in the belt, more than six million are urban, while an additional three million are rural-nonfarm. Moreover, the belt contains great metropolitan centers such as Indianapolis, Chicago, and Omaha, as well as many smaller cities. Indeed, in 1940 the states with some counties in the corn belt had fifty-five cities with over 50,000 population. In spite of this diversity within the region, however, there is enough homogeneity to make it well known throughout the nation, and even the world, as a farming region or belt.[1]

If one were to ask those who live in the corn belt to characterize it, the picture given would be of its superlatives. They would reply that it has the richest land and the most up-to-date farms in the country; that its people are the most independent, the most democratic, and the most typically American in all the United States; that its wealth is more equally distributed, and the rights of everyone to advance according to his abilities more zealously safeguarded and promoted than in most other sections of the country. And if an inquirer searches for the facts, he will discover that the corn belt does have the highest percentage of its land graded in classes 1 and 2, the highest percentage of its farms in the $1,500-to-$4,000 gross-income group, and the highest and evenest level of living among farm families

---

[1] See map (Fig. 38).



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 38 CORN BELT

to be found in the nation. He will also find that, as compared to any other commercial farming belt, a smaller percentage of the farm operators do off-farm work and a higher percentage of all the farm work is done by family labor. To repeat, life is not uniform in the corn belt, but as Graham Hutton, the English author of *Midwest at Noon,* says:

> The people made themselves, the midwesterners, since, however different they were in their origins and whatever they brought in with them, they all had to adapt themselves to the new and growing life of a new and growing region. It was always, and still is, "becoming." It has not yet completely "jelled" into something immutable and irrevocable. Within a setting fixed only by natural boundaries, soil, and climate, everything else was highly mobile and fluid; institutions, governmental systems, ideas, and Midwest society itself were constantly, and are still, in flux — as you would expect of so vast a melting-pot and such vast quantities of different alloys. The easterner, like the European who came still farther from the east, quickly became altered in this fluid society and took on many of its peculiar characteristics. True to its own origin in great natural extremes, and in the hands of men of great extremes, the Midwest in its miraculous development produced extremes far greater than those of any other region.

Lands are not everywhere as rich as they are in central Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Certainly there are fringes to the belt on all sides — bordering in the east on industry, in the north on dairying, in the west on wheat, and in the south on subsistence farming — where various characteristics of life are influenced by the types of production and the modes of life that prevail just beyond these fringes. Still, the similarity of the farms, the houses, and even of the country towns in the corn belt causes many to describe the area as an endless picture of sameness.

As a result of the quadrangle survey that covered the whole area, roads quite generally follow section lines, so that the whole countryside, when seen from an airplane, looks like a giant checkerboard. The farmstead pattern is also strikingly symmetrical, since the farms are in quarter-section units with their boundaries universally fenced, and the fields within these boundaries also being square or rectangular and generally fenced. The farmhouses are practically all frame structures, usually painted white, while large barns, corn cribs, hog houses, machine sheds, and feed lots and pastures dotted with cattle and hogs fill the landscape. In the late spring and summer the checkerboard effect is even sharper as green pastures and still greener corn fields alternate evenly with yellow patches of ripening small grain and with grayish fields of hay. If farmers are working in the fields, it is easy to see, even from the highway, how highly mechanized corn-belt farming is. There will be machinery at use in the fields, and in almost every barnyard there will be an automobile, a truck, a corn elevator, and other mechanical equipment. No one would have any difficulty recognizing the corn belt.

The People and Their Work on the Land

According to Russell Smith, an authority on the influence of physiography, "The Corn Belt is a gift of the gods – the rain god, the sun god, the wind god, the ice god, and the gods of geology." He means that the deep soils of the corn belt, which are glacial and dust deposits of remarkable richness, and the moderately heavy and dependable rainfall together with long hot summer days and nights furnish optimum conditions for the corn plant. In fact, Smith calls all this "nature's conspiracy to make man grow corn." The existence of rich natural physical resources, however, constitutes only a partial explanation of why the corn belt is what it is, and why its people think as they do about it. After all, the Indians who occupied these rich lands and were subjected to this salubrious, temperate climate were not primarily corn producers. Having neither machinery nor transportation lines to connect them with a great developing national and international market, they lived largely on the buffalo, deer, and other wild life that were nurtured by the rich prairie grassland, or on other types of game and fish that were plentiful in the timbered areas and streams. Except in the names of certain places, the culture of the Indians has therefore left little imprint on the corn belt.

White men did not specialize in the production of corn when they first settled in this area. They too made use of the grazing potentialities of the natural grasslands, and as late as 1870, cattlemen were still herding great droves of range cattle on the prairies of the western part of the areas. Wheat more often than corn furnished the main cash crop of the Midwestern pioneer, and until about 1860, other areas outranked the Midwest in corn production. Even in Ohio, which had a considerable settlement as early as 1810 and a population of 1,519,000 in 1840, less corn was being produced in 1850 than in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. Not until 1860 did the five leading corn-producing states become part of the present corn belt, while Iowa was not one of these five until 1870. Like other first settlers, those who moved into the present corn belt were for some time necessarily subsistence farmers. They made direct use of the existing natural resources and supplemented these with ample gardens, but as quickly as possible — and more quickly than in most other areas — they began producing what they could most readily sell.[2]

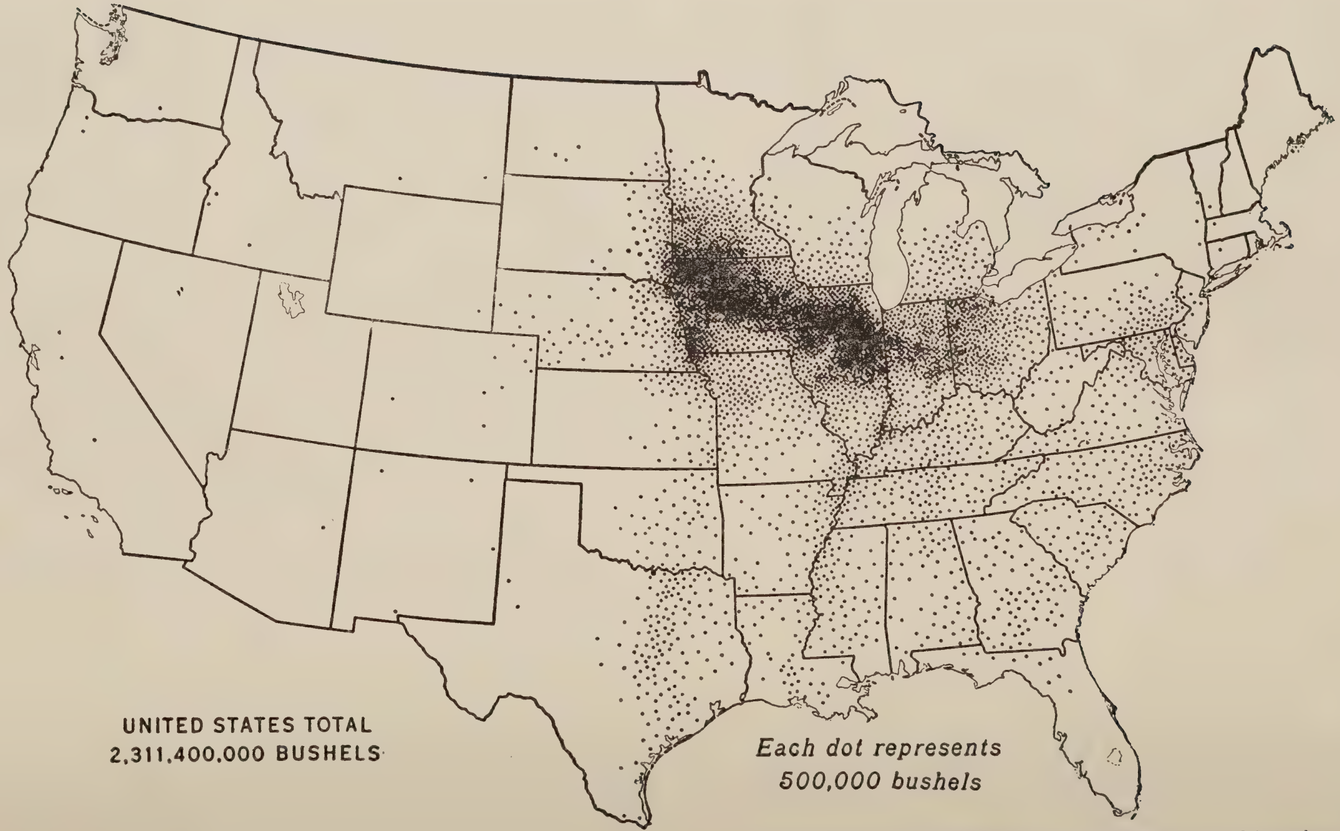
Before settlement was completed, rail transportation had developed and Eastern and foreign market outlets were increasing rapidly. Subsistence farming did not, therefore, predominate for any great length of time, but was, almost from the beginning, quickly and amply supplemented by commercialized agriculture. Although wheat was produced abundantly and profitably, and was more easily prepared for shipment than corn, it was not so good as corn for feeding animals. Therefore, its production was not expanded to the same extent, and the corn-livestock combination in farm production became thoroughly well established by the time the western portion of the belt was settled. Grown men who settled in Iowa in the late 1840's or early 1850's ran, in the decades of active farming experience that followed, the full gamut from discovery through adjustment to final settlement of the problem of the best ecological and economic adaptation of farming to the area. The rapidity with which they accomplished this and the surety with which it has been maintained ever since help to explain the cultural stability of the corn belt and the confident attitudes of its farmers.

The corn belt was settled primarily between 1830 and 1870, for although considerable numbers of people had moved into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri before 1830, most of them at that time were in the southern parts of these states rather than in those areas that later became the heart of the corn belt. Corn production continued to edge west and northwest even after 1870, but attempts to make corn a major crop in the western, or even the central, parts of Nebraska and Kansas proved to be a mistake both ecologically and economically. Today, therefore, the corn belt gives way to the wheat belt in central Nebraska and Kansas. It is significant that the period during which this attempt was made to expand corn production beyond the real corn belt coincided with the period during which the rush of population into the Middle West began to subside.

Once the corn belt was fully settled, the area had not only evolved its well-established system of farming, but had also received as a deposit from the agricultural frontier, which was the great national melting pot, the most ethnically cosmopolitan population to occupy any area of the country. The people who settled the corn belt between 1830 and 1870 came from all the older-settled areas of the nation, and from a number of foreign countries, with the majority of the native-born migrating from states east of the area, and the greatest percentage of the foreign-born coming from Germany. Literally all of these early settlers became corn-livestock farmers, and their

---

[2] See maps (Figs. 39 and 40).

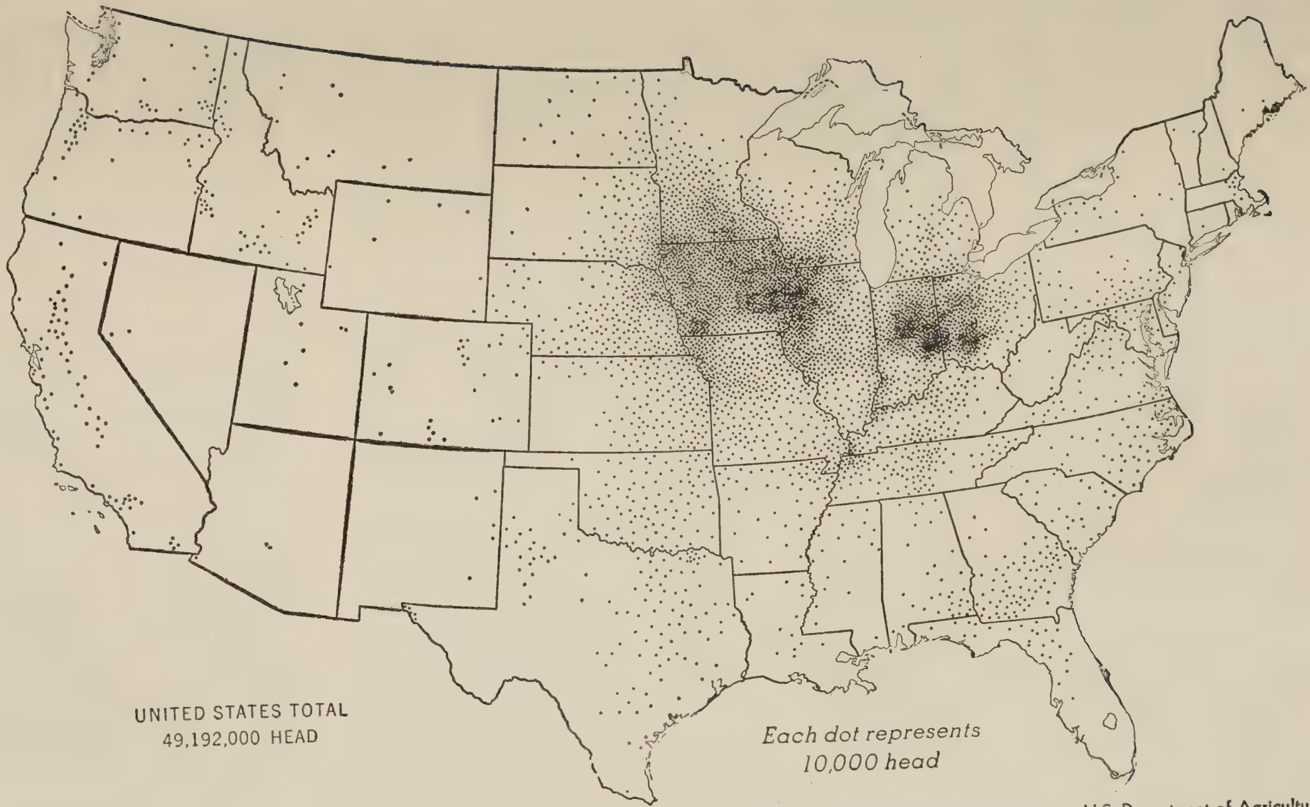

UNITED STATES TOTAL
2,311,400,000 BUSHELS
Each dot represents
500,000 bushels

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 39 CORN HARVESTED FOR GRAIN

PRODUCTION, 1939

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.



UNITED STATES TOTAL
49,192,000 HEAD

Each dot represents
10,000 head

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 40 HOGS AND PIGS

NUMBER SOLD BY FARMERS, 1939

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.

children and grandchildren, who still comprise approximately one fourth of the population living on the farms and in the towns and smaller cities of the area, now follow the pattern of work and life that constitutes the present homogeneity of the corn belt's rural culture. In 1920, when it was possible to know for the first time the composition of the farm population, only 4.5 per cent of the farm people in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa — the heart of the corn belt — were foreign-born; but approximately 17 per cent were children either of foreign-born parents or of mixed foreign-born and native parents, with the greatest number falling in the latter category. In addition to the 21.5 per cent who were foreign-born, or who were children of at least one foreign-born parent, there were many who were the grandchildren of foreign-born settlers.

Corn-belt farms are family-sized commercial enterprises. As compared with farms in any other commercial-farming belt, they still produce a greater volume and value of home-consumed products, and a greater bulk of the labor force is furnished by the farmers themselves and members of their families. In fact, the types of work to be done on a typical corn-belt farm are so diversified that all members of the farm family, except the very small children, participate in the operations. Women seldom work in the fields, but they care for the poultry and dairy products, often do some work in the "kitchen garden," and at times help out with the milking and other chores. Children help both fathers and mothers with their work, and boys begin when they are not more than ten years of age to do field work beside their older brothers or fathers. It is still the more or less common custom for young men to remain in their parents' homes and to help with their fathers' farms until they are twenty-one years of age. At the stage in the family cycle when at least one mature son is still a member of the family circle, a corn-belt farm is as near to being an integral family economic and social unit as can be imagined. It is only at this stage, however, that the commercial farm is family-sized. Before sons have approached or reached full maturity, or after they have left their parents' home, it is necessary to employ some hired labor to operate the substantial enterprise of a typical corn-belt farm.

Although the area is best suited for, and primarily given over to, corn production, other crops are needed for animal feed and as factors in a crop-rotation system that is necessary to help maintain soil fertility. Corn-belt farmers therefore produce not only corn, but also oats, hay, soya beans, and some wheat; and raise not only hogs, but also an abundance of cattle, poultry, and some sheep. If what might be called an oat belt were to be located on a dot map, the map would be very similar to one of the corn belt; a beef-cattle map would include the heart of the corn belt; and a poultry map would show that the corn belt is one of the country's great poultry-producing areas. Fattened hogs and cattle are the easiest and most profitable mediums through which to market the cropland, meadow, and pasture products, but the whole farming process is far from simple. The care of a series of crops and of young and fattening animals, plus the care of buildings, fences, and machinery, distributes farm work over the whole year and makes corn-livestock farming a full-time occupation for all, or most, members of the farm family.

The rhythms of farm life and work, being dictated by the biological and physical demands of the plants and animals that constituted the major farm products, and being sharply conditioned by the rhythm of the seasons, were for many decades very similar throughout the corn belt. From the time the frost was out of the ground until the corn was laid by and the hay and small grain were harvested, there was a rising crescendo of work: during March, April, and early May, the seeding and planting of annual field crops and the care of newly born livestock dominated all activities; June was almost entirely devoted to cultivating corn; and in July there were haying and the harvesting of small grain. Then during August there was generally a "breathing spell," which was often taken up with family picnics, trips, fairs, and revival meetings. Another period of driving work came in the fall – "to get the corn out of the field before snow falls." And during the winter period, between the corn harvest and the oat seeding, fully half of the daylight hours were occupied with the livestock, which not only required regular feeding and care, but also protection against severe weather. Altogether, in no other type of farming, except dairying, were the necessities of year-round work greater than they were in corn-livestock farming, and in no production belt was the ceaseless drive during the peak labor seasons more pronounced. The fact that all the farm families, and all their members, participated in these drives helps considerably in explaining the attitudes of the typical corn belter, not only toward work and play, but also toward many other activities of life.

Almost as clearly marked as the seasonal rhythms, the daily rhythms were also rigorous. During rush seasons the schedule was: out of bed at four thirty or five o'clock to do the chores, eat breakfast, and be in the fields by six or seven; an hour off at noon for "dinner" and rest; back to the fields until six thirty or seven, when there were more chores and supper before going to bed by eight thirty or nine. During the winter months the getting up was an hour later, and more time out was taken at noon, but since the burden of chores was increased at this season, work was generally not completed much before dark.

Basically these old time rhythms are still followed. With the advent of tractors and electricity, however, the daily rhythms have become more irregular on most of the family-sized, commercial farms of the corn belt. Even on the subsistence farms, which are on the fringes, the working day now more nearly conforms to urban patterns. Most corn-belt farmers and their families, living on all-weather roads, are now relatively free, except at the peak seasons, to run into town, visit auctions and markets, and attend Farm Bureau, home economics, 4-H, or other meetings. This change in rural life is due to the fact that the arduousness and urgency of farm work are not as great today as they used to be. Although seasonal peaks still have to be met in planting, cultivating, and harvesting, many more acres can be handled with heavy modern equipment in fewer days and with much less physical exertion on the part of the operators. In fact, the production of corn, now grown from hybrid seed and with the use of powerful tractors and heavy planting, cultivating, and harvesting machines, is so fully mechanized that the corn is seldom touched by human hands. The corn harvest is thus no longer a period of arduous driving work, and the traditional corn-picking contests have disappeared.

That corn-belt farming has become so mechanized is not surprising, for almost from the time of earliest settlement the typical corn-belt farmer has employed some form of mechanical aid. Big ox teams broke the prairie, and farm implements requiring four-horse teams to operate them were used to break, disk, and harrow the twenty to forty acres of fields that were to form a farm. Now the work that at one time required the long and arduous labor of all members of the family is done by tractors, multiple-row planters and cultivators, corn pickers, elevator pick-up balers, and manure spreaders. The majority of the farm-implement factories are located in the corn belt, and work constantly to invent and improve labor-saving machinery. The corn-belt farmers, out of both habit and pride, are quick to purchase these inventions and improvements as soon as they are available.

Thus, it is no wonder that levels of living among farm families in the corn belt are higher than those in any other major type-farming area in the country. Farm residences are substantial; a very high percentages of families own automobiles; practically all of them possess radios; the telephone has been almost universal for thirty years or more; and now that rural electrification is also available, a high percentage of the farm homes have electric lights. As a matter of fact, with the exception of central-heating equipment, homes have become almost as highly mechanized as farms. Moreover, a large percentage of farm youth attend high school, and many farmers and their wives have even graduated from college. It is significant that, as in most other social characteristics in the corn belt, there are no great differences between the levels of living of farm-tenant families and those of farm-owner families.

The corn belt is not, of course, as uniform or as homogeneous as these broad generalizations might make it appear. The proportion of all farm land planted to corn varies, and there are differences between areas that concentrate on field-crop farming and those that specialize more in livestock, dairy, and poultry products, as well as differences in the sizes of farms and farm incomes. There are also some differences in the age, sex, and ethnic factors of population composition, and in the proportion of the population that lives on farms but does off-farm work. While all sections of the corn belt rank high in the indexes of levels of living, few rank as high as do the counties in the heart of the belt.

The first major difference between the various sections of the belt is in the percentage that acres planted to corn represents of all acres of farm land. For the whole corn belt this is about 23 per cent, but it varies from as low as 12 per cent to as high as 34.1 per cent, and is about a fourth higher in the western than in the eastern portions of the belt. The second major difference is in the percentage that the value of livestock products sold represents of the value of all farm products, and in this respect the eastern part outranks the western by approximately one half. The cause for the difference lies in the fact that farms in the western part are less developed with regard to dairy and poultry products, and depend more completely on straight corn-livestock production; so they employ more hired labor, the farmers do less off-farm work, and the gross farm product has a higher value. Farms in the western corn belt thus not only come nearer to furnishing full-time employment for farm operators and members of their families, but also include a higher percentage of farms that are, at least during peak labor seasons, above family size.

There are also significant differences among the various sections of the belt in the types of off-farm work that the farmers do. In the western section, which has a heavy corn acreage, off-farm work is most often custom work for other farmers; whereas in the eastern section it is more often town or semiurban work. In the southern section it may be any one, or all, of those types of work that are done by so-called "subsistence" or self-sufficiency farmers, that is, work in mines, railroad shops, or industrial plants, on other farms in the area, or even as migrant labor in other areas.

In 1870, 12.7 per cent of the corn-belt population were foreign-born. The southern and eastern fringes of the belt, being the first to be settled, never at any time had a high percentage of foreign-born in their population; whereas the western parts were settled last, during the period when great numbers of Germans and Scandinavians were pouring into American agriculture. As a result, a large portion of the best land in the western section is today owned and farmed by the descendants of the immigrants from northern Europe who arrived between 1850 and 1890. The varying percentages of foreign-born farm operators in 1920 are a good measure of the differences that resulted directly from these historic facts of settlement and immigration. Moving across the corn belt from the areas settled earliest to those settled latest, these percentages were: Ohio, 5.5; Indiana, 3.1; Missouri, 3.2; Illinois, 9.3; Iowa, 15.1; Minnesota, 37.7; Nebraska, 19.8.

The relatively larger size of the farms in the western part of the belt is also partly a result of later settlement. Not only had the Homestead Act, which provided for 160-acre farms, been passed before all the western sections of the belt were settled, but also larger farm machinery had been invented. Moreover, unlike the farms in the eastern and southern fringes, western farms did not have to be carved out of the woods.

In studying the differences that exist between the various sections of the corn belt, the comparisons drawn between the heart of the belt and its fringes are probably the most significant, for each fringe partakes somewhat of the type of farming that prevails along that border of the belt. The heart of the belt includes central Illinois; most of Iowa; and relatively small parts of northern Missouri, eastern Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota; and southern Minnesota. The eastern fringe borders on industrialized areas; the southern, on general and self-sufficing farming areas; the western, on the wheat belt; and the northern, on the dairy belt. As has been noted, the heart of the belt, in comparison with the fringes, has a higher percentage of all farm acres planted to corn, higher farm incomes, less off-farm work, more hired labor, more tenancy, and a higher level of living. Each fringe, however, differs from all the others with respect to these characteristics, and must, therefore, be briefly described.

In the eastern fringe the proportion of rural-nonfarm population is high, because many people who are employed in the numerous small industries of the area live on farms or in small towns. There are a great many small truck and poultry farms (as has already been pointed out, livestock, dairy, and poultry production rank high as sources of farm income) and many small and large canning industries. Farms are smaller than the average for the whole belt, and the value of land and of buildings is lower, as is the value of implements and machines per farm. The eastern fringe also has some socially significant characteristics. The farm operators are older, and the percentage that males fifteen to thirty-four years of age comprise of all males in the farm population is low. Moreover, the percentage of change in the population over a decade is less than the average for the corn belt as a whole. Less than one half of one per cent of the farm population is foreign-born. High schools are prevalent and high-school attendance high, and there are comparatively many more libraries and hospitals available to farm people. In short, rural life in this section is more urbanized than it is in the others.

The southern fringe includes fingers of the self-sufficing farming belt which here run into the corn belt. In areas where broken and relatively poor land, which generally borders on streams, covers a small section, there are whole neighborhoods called "possum trots," "string towns," and similar names indicating they are very much like Ozark areas. Some fairly large valleys are typically corn belt in character, while the hills have typically self-sufficient or general farms. In the whole section the percentage of farm land devoted to corn is low. The farms are small; the value of land and buildings is not more than one fourth of the average for the whole corn belt; and the value of farm machinery per farm is less than one fourth of that for the belt. Of the total population of the southern fringe, the percentage living on farms is very high, although a much larger proportion of farm operators do off-farm work, and their mean age is almost three years higher than the average for the belt. In contrast, the proportion that males fifteen to thirty-four years of age comprise of the farm population is about 2 per cent lower than the average for the belt, and 6 or 7 per cent lower than the average in the heart of the belt. There are few foreign-born people in this section. The amount of change in the population within a decade is high, even though the percentage of owner-operators is relatively great. Lastly, the level-of-living index is lower for counties in the southern fringe than for any others in the corn belt.

On its western fringe the corn belt fades into the wheat belt and, at a few places, directly into the range-livestock areas. The percentage of farm land in corn is high, and the farms are large. The value of land and buildings is high, while the value of machinery per farm is considerably lower than it is in the heart of the belt, but higher than it is in the southern or eastern fringes. The percentage of the total population living on farms is considerably higher than the average for the belt, and the amount of off-farm work is the lowest in the belt. The mean age of farm operators is considerably lower than the belt average, and the percentage that males fifteen to thirty-four years of age comprise of all males in the farm population is relatively high. The foreign-born constitute about 5 per cent of the farm population; tenancy is high; and the level-of-living index is ten points lower than that for the belt as a whole.

In the northern fringe, which borders on the dairy belt, the topography is generally rougher, the climate more humid, the summer days not so hot, and the land better suited to grass. Much of this fringe actually overlaps the milk sheds of large cities, and a large proportion of its population is of Scandinavian origin. These are all factors that operate to make the northern dairy belt what it is, and most of these factors influence the character of the northern fringe of the corn belt. The percentage of farm land in corn is considerably above the average for the whole corn belt, but considerably below that for the heart of the belt. The value of land and buildings per farm is high; but land constitutes a lower proportion of this value, and buildings a much higher proportion, than they do in the heart of the belt; while the value of machinery per farm is about the same as it is in the heart of the belt. The percentage of tenancy is generally high. The mean age of farm operators is the lowest of any corn-belt area, and the percentage that males fifteen to thirty-four years of age comprise of all farm men is the highest in the belt. The amount of off-farm work done by operators is low, with the percentage of the total population living on farms being higher than the belt average, but not higher than the average in its heart area. The proportion of the farm population that is foreign-born is between 7 and 8 per cent — the highest in the corn belt. The level-of-living index is the highest for any of the fringe areas, and about fifteen points above the average for the belt, or about equal to that in the heart of the belt.

In the heart of the belt, the "old American stocks" have tended to educate themselves away from the farms. Some foreign stocks are doing the same thing, but others cling more tenaciously to agriculture. More farmers are doing off-farm work, and fewer are retiring. With increasing commercialization and mechanization, farm risks have become greater. A generation ago Americans of pioneer stock were beginning to send their sons and daughters to high school and college, and many of these entered professions or businesses instead of returning to the farm. Meanwhile, newly arrived or second-generation immigrant farmers were giving their children only a common school education and retaining them on farms. These families did not by any means have a low level of living, but all their members worked hard, and the profits from farming were used year after year to pay for their newly acquired farms. Now their children and grandchildren are attending high schools and colleges;[3] they are equipping their homes with the most modern facilities; and they are spending their cash incomes for automobiles and picture shows. But in the period during which their semipeasant modes of life still prevailed, they purchased the farms that had been pioneered by others.

---

[3] Recent studies made in Minnesota, however, indicate that in areas heavily populated by certain foreign stocks, children still attend school a fewer number of years than do children in areas populated by old American stock.

The retirement of pioneer farmers was also an important factor in this shift in ownership, for between 1890 and 1920 those who had homesteaded their land, or had purchased it cheaply in pioneer days, were dying or retiring in steadily increasing numbers. Their profits from current production had for twenty to fifty years gone into houses, barns, fences, and orchards; and the value of their land had multiplied many times over. They could therefore sell their farms and live comfortably during the declining years of their lives. Many corn-belt towns became filled with retired farmers. Furthermore, a large percentage of the pioneer farmers who retired or died left no son or daughter on the farm, because the children had entered some profession or town business; and when the estates were divided among the children, many transferred their equities out of farming. In fact, in probably no other area of the country has so large a volume of farm-created wealth been transferred out of rural life, for in no other area has the out-migration been so largely composed of persons who had wealth to carry with them.

On the other hand, during the period of development commercialization automatically capitalized high annual incomes into higher land values, and these increases tended to be calculated a half generation to a generation in advance. As a result, the corn belt has been subject to booms and busts, with many farmers losing the ownership of their farms during the bust periods. Thus the risks in corn-belt farming have not been due to periodic crop failures, such as occur frequently in the wheat belt, and they have not been as great as in pure cash-crop farming. But in the troughs of relatively long time price cycles, men with heavily mortgaged farms, and with large investments in operating equipment, have found themselves unable to carry the financial burden. The first of these busts came in the early 1870's, before the western sections of the belt had been fully developed; the second came in the 1890's, when most farms were still in the hands of original settlers, and before land values had risen to dangerous levels. The third and most devastating came at the end of World War I, after the fine farms of the corn belt, so profitable during the war, had risen to three and four times their 1900 value; and after the average farm had been sold three or four times since it was homesteaded or originally purchased, and had been bought by the final owner with little prospect of gaining any unearned increment by reselling it. The census report of 1920 showed that farms in Iowa with their full complement of buildings, livestock, and machinery were appraised at $40,000, because both loaning agencies and farmers had developed the Utopian faith that farms, which had moved up in value per acre from ten dollars in 1870 to fifty dollars in 1890 to one hundred dollars in 1910 and to two hundred dollars in 1920, would continue to rise in value. This faith was a direct outgrowth of the fact that corn-belt farming had developed into highly commercial agriculture, the dizzy heights of which had been attained by such a constant and long-time trend that few corn-belt farmers thought of the climb as inflationary, or of the attitudes and practices of the participants as speculative.

Despite all the differences existing between different sections of the corn belt, corn-livestock production, once well established by the physical and economic forces listed in the early part of this chapter, tended to dominate, and thus to condition, the broad contours of the whole corn-belt culture. This type of production has continued even since it became apparent that it was resulting in serious erosion of the rolling hills, even when it has required elaborate and expensive drainage, and even when it came up against drought in the western fringe. It dominates the lives, not only of the farm people, but also of the townspeople, as well as, to a considerable extent, the life and work of many people in the cities of the belt. In hundreds of small towns are located canning factories and other small factories that process farm products or manufacture products consumed on farms, while huge farm-machine factories, and packing, central grain storage, and processing plants are big industries.

Groups and Group Relationships

The corn belt was settled in neighborhood clusters of families who functioned together in so many types of activities that even the many great changes that have taken place since pioneer days have not erased all these old neighborhood boundaries. The whole area was organized into counties, and each county became not only a political, but also to some extent an economic, and even a self-conscious, social unit of organization, with county-seat towns, which grew into being the chief trade centers, becoming in recent years the chief social centers for farm people. Counties were divided into townships small enough in geographic size to be usable for the organization and administration of institutions, agencies, and programs in which farm people were most directly interested. They have not yet lost all these functions, nor have they by any means lost their self-conscious existence. The diversity of the people, combined with their common ambitions, fostered democracy and minimized or inhibited the development of any pronounced economic-social classes. Today special-interest groups are organized in many different ways; few, if any of them – or of any other types of organization – have become so institutionalized that they cannot readily change. As new and easier means of transportation have been developed, many old neighborhood activities have been transferred to a wider geographic base, and farm families in the corn belt not only go into the local towns much more frequently than they formerly did, but also make trips to larger cities in order to purchase certain types of goods and to attend cultural and recreational events. Still, these wider contacts have not generally caused farm people to lessen their interest or participation in local affairs and activities.

It was because of isolation from the outside, and because of the need for mutual aid, that neighborhoods dominated the organizational life of farm people in the corn belt from the days of earliest settlement until the coming of the automobile. No matter how diverse or unfamiliar they were, the families who moved into a newly settled area immediately felt dependent on one another. Although it was quite common for groups of relatives or families from the same localities of previous residence to settle as near one another as possible, seldom did these groups of old associates constitute all the people living on adjacent farms. As a result, strangers, from both necessity and desire, became neighbors.

During pioneer days loneliness and need everywhere created mutual aid groups, and these groups quickly became institutionalized into school and road districts. Thousands of these local district schools still exist, and although they are not the social centers they were at one time, they persist as organizations to which many farm people have a deep loyalty. The local road districts, most often coterminous with local school districts, were highly functional during the period when the only way to build and maintain roads was by joint action of the farmers themselves. Both school and road districts were formal organizations with elected officials and prescribed procedures, but these elements were relatively unimportant. The significant facts were that farm people joined hands to construct and maintain schools and roads, and that the families who associated themselves for these two formal functions banded together also into informal groups for purposes of exchanging work and tools, of mutual aid, and of common participation in practically all phases of association that functioned on a larger base than the individual family circle. Children, except on the geographic edges of local school districts, seldom associated with anyone outside their school group. Their families visited much more often with one another than with anyone else, while their fathers worked on the roads, and threshed and shelled corn in neighborhood work groups. The last day of school, school exhibitions, box suppers, spelling bees, programs of literary societies, and sometimes more formal types of recreation took place in the one-room district schoolhouse. Outside persons and agencies approached locality groups through the medium of the district school organization.

School districts became the legal and jurisdictional entities for the formal functions of education. Many of them, largely for reasons of functional convenience, also became road districts. This arrangement was not entirely adequate, for people other than those who lived in local districts had to use the roads as channels of transportation between farms and towns, and depended also on the bridges that had to be built across the streams. Bridge building, therefore, was one of the first tasks to be taken over by counties. Other road-building and maintenance tasks were taken over by the township, which, because it was a clearly defined geographic area and a legal entity with prescribed powers and functions, soon became an important governmental unit. It was legally prescribed as an election precinct, and it early took over the administration of roads and, to some extent, of schools. It elected its own officials, took care of its own poor, and often became a sanitary, drainage, or police district. It was seldom, if ever, a "town" in the New England sense, but its government was nearer the people than county government, and, because it seldom contained an incorporated town, was almost purely a farmer's government. Although many of the activities and obligations of the township have now been taken over by county and state governments, it functioned for so long a period of time that when farm people living in the corn belt are asked today what community they live in, .hey will name their township rather than their local school district, their trade areas, or any other area or unit of association.

There were, and still are, rural communities other than townships. Indeed, church and nationality groups, rather than townships or crossroad trade centers, have most often provided the focus and boundaries of open-country communities. If and when a large portion of the people are members of the same church denomination, the church community group constitutes a quite cohesive open-country community. There have been many such communities in the corn belt. Most frequently they are congregations of nationality groups, but there are also Quaker, Mennonite, Catholic, Lutheran, and a few other outstanding denominational or church-centered farm communities. Two factors have, however, kept the church from being the universal basis for community organization and activities. First, in most farm localities not all the families were adherents of the same denomination, and some therefore had to travel a considerable distance from their homes and go beyond the areas of their day-by-day associations in order to join with a group that was large enough to maintain a church organization. Second, nearly all of the "union churches" that were organized to overcome this inconvenience had to secure ministers for their Sunday services from churches in a near-by town. Each of these ministers tended to confine his weekday pastoral services to adherents of his own denomination, and, furthermore, almost certainly urged the adherents of his own denomination to affiliate themselves with his town congregation. As a result, no minister could, or did, become a community leader. These factors, together with the fact that the puritan type of religious doctrine, which was quite universal, kept churches from rendering community or social services, and with the development of good roads and automobiles, have led to the abandonment of thousands of open-country churches and to the shift to towns that has occurred in church membership. Thus, except in areas where nationality or religious groups have constituted the majority of the farm population, the church has not been a nucleus or focus for community organizations and activities in the corn belt.

Where and when schools have been consolidated, they have furnished the basis for community activities. As the children have become participants in groups other than the local neighborhood ones, school and extracurricular activities have drawn their parents and other adults into large community groups, many of which are wholly in open country. Where consolidated schools have been located in towns, they have established, or at least stimulated, increasing contacts on a trade-area basis. While there is a growing tendency to locate these schools in towns, in most areas of the corn belt the traditional adherence and loyalty to the township have caused schools to be consolidated on a township basis, with their location sometimes being in small trade centers, but more often in the open country. Another loyalty, however, to old district schools, has been a pronounced deterrent to consolidation, so that some sections of the corn belt literally form the nation's one-room-school belt.

Trade areas have always been composed of functional, but seldom self-conscious, groups, and as market centers for commercial farming, railroad towns quickly outranked all other towns in the competition for farmer participation. They became the locations for grain elevators and stockyards to which farmers delivered their farm products, as well as the purchasing centers in which farmers who were highly commercialized and had a high level of living secured goods and services for both production and consumption. The towns that were already well established were unable, in the race for choice as the county seat, to compete successfully with these railroad towns, to which farmers wanted to go for business purposes. County-seat towns therefore became not only prominent, but also dominant in the corn belt, for the functions performed by county officials were added to their trade functions. In due time they became not only the places of residence and business for the persons and private agencies that served farmers' interests, but also the headquarters of agencies, both public and private, that came to serve the county as a whole. They are, of course, the residences of all the professionals who serve both farm and town people, and they have also become the chief harbors for retired farmers. Most farm people now attend church in towns; many consolidated schools are located there; their picture shows have become the chief entertainment for farm people; and they have developed into something approaching social centers. Moreover, country towns are in some ways becoming self-conscious social units. Although the people who compose their constituents as such are by no means banded into the cohesive types of groups that constituted the old farm-neighborhood pattern, they do see each other on the streets, in the stores, at church, and at extracurricular school events. In addition, they meet together in the county farmer's organizations and other county-wide meetings, and all feel quite at home in, and somewhat loyal to, the town that constitutes their trade and social center.

In the corn belt the county itself has always been an important unit for social action. But during the period when township governments were more functional than they are at the present, many farm people looked on the county government as something imposed upon them, and they did not want county officials to place any restrictions on their township governments or on their local school districts. While most of the farmers would willingly accept local school or township offices and responsibilities, few of them wanted or were willing to accept county offices. In fact, they felt that any farmer who sought county office was not in his heart a real farmer. Feeling no awe and, most of them, little respect towards what they called the "courthouse gang," the farmers quite generally believed that county officeholders were lazy, and they quite often suspected that the contracts for the bridges the county government built in their townships contained some graft. When counties took over the supervision of roads and schools, many farmers complained that government of the things most important to them was passing out of their hands.

The role of the county has recently, however, been greatly enlarged. Not only do automobiles carry farm people into areas of the county to which they have been strangers, but the poor roads in some townships have also caused them to demand a county road system. With better transportation facilities they went more frequently to the county seat, and lost their feeling that the courthouse and county government belonged to, or at least was run by, someone else. Moreover, during the last thirty years a number of state and federal agencies have established agents, offices, and services in counties, and these are always located in county-seat towns. Many of these services have required that the people in the counties co-operate through their local governments. Counties have thus increased their scope of action by taking over functions that were at one time performed by townships and local districts, and by adding new functions in co-operation with state and federal governments. They have also become the areas of organization for farm bureaus, farmers' unions, pomona granges, and church and educational associations. Since early pioneer days societies or associations of farmers, townspeople, and county officials have operated county fairs, and most corn-belt counties have had one or more weekly newspapers that have sought to build county consciousness. Today farm people in the corn belt still designate the places where they live by naming the township and even the local school district, but they also take pride in their county.

Farm organizations have always been strong in the corn belt. Even before the Civil War local agricultural or farmer's clubs were prevalent, while county-fair associations were organized early. The Grange in 1870 came near to being a corn-belt organization, and the Farmers' Alliance became powerful and influential during the 1880's and early 1890's. Since 1920 the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and the Farmers' Union have all had many members among corn-belt farmers, with the Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa state Farm Bureaus today being four of the strongest state bureaus in the nation. Their co-operative business, their educational programs, and their political influence are well recognized and respected by everyone; and their existence and strength are matters of pride on the part of farm people. They not only protect and fight for the economic interests of farmers, but also, through their subordinate or local organizations, provide opportunities for recreation and cultural advancement.

The corn belt is too diverse in many of its characteristics, and spreads over too great an area geographically, to be a society or culture. It has no organizations that are belt-wide and exclusively centered around those who produce corn and livestock, and it has but recently begun to develop a body of literature and of art to symbolize its mode of life and thought. It is, however, sufficiently different from other sections of the country, and even from other sections of the Middle West, to make those who live in it aware of its common characteristics in action and thought. Townspeople and many city people, participating in these modes of action and thought, are always conscious of good and bad weather and seasons for corn, concerned about livestock prices, and proud of corn-belt farmers. They know they are a part of a region that has the most evenly substantial farmers and the highest level of living among its farm people to be found in the nation. Thousands of them own farms themselves, and hundreds of thousands of them were born and reared on farms; they have never lost their reverence for the good land or their interest in agricultural progress. A number of metropolitan newspapers recognize the problems of farm people and farming as major public issues and deal with them constantly. These papers have wide circulation in rural areas, where the farm people think of them as regional rather than city newspapers, and a number of them own and operate radio stations that broadcast farm programs daily. Some of the strongest and best known farm journals are published in the corn belt, and are read regularly by many people in the towns and cities as well as on the farms.

The Traditions, Attitudes, and Values of the People

The institutionalization of the corn-livestock type of farm production that now prevails in the corn belt has held the economy of the area stable for about three generations, and has created habits and attitudes predominant everywhere in the belt, among town as well as farm people. The statement, "Yes, we produce corn but we make our money out of hogs," has been a shibboleth in the belt for seventy-five years. The rotation of crops is maintained, not only as a good production technique, but also as a tradition of good farming. And the crops that are rotated — corn, small grain, and legumes — are all not only essential to corn-livestock production, but also constitute a good combination of economic enterprises and a system of farming by which the fertility of the soil may be maintained. These considerations, however, are rationalizations of the facts. The true motivating force is the emotion or sentiment whereby a farmer who does not practice the well-established rotation system is believed to be neither intelligent nor moral.

Mechanized farming and scientific farming are also traditional in the area. One-horse plows and other small implements were never feasible or much used in the corn belt. Not only did the topography lend itself to the use of large machines, but also the amount of acreage farmed, which for a long time was worked almost entirely by family labor, required the use of the largest machines that could be secured. Quite unconsciously corn-belt farmers consider any person who uses anything less than the most modern machinery both incompetent and backward.

Moreover, from the beginning, livestock production on land that increased rapidly in value stimulated the improvement of flocks and herds. The corn belt thus became not only the nation's chief animal-production belt, but also the area in which the agricultural experiment stations did outstanding work in animal genetics. In fact, during the period between 1890 and 1910 the area developed into almost a breeding area for the type of livestock admired by fanciers. The most significant result of this development was that all the herds and flocks were improved as the improvements in the stock that was being bred by the fanciers filtered down to all the farmers. The most recent demonstration of the extent and rapidity of the inculcation of science into agriculture is that provided by the spread of hybrid seed corn.

In addition to the institutionalized forms and habits of production, the corn belt and Middle West have developed a whole group of "isms" or shibboleths that are clues to rural culture in the area. For instance, in no section of the United States do farm people more militantly declare their individual independence than they do in the corn belt, where they claim to be substantial, independent entrepreneurs even though many of them are tenant farmers. Not stopping with this declaration of independence, they are, to a considerable degree, further convinced that they are superior to most other people, with their superiority being measured by the fact that they are hard workers, good managers, intelligent citizens, and moral persons. They do not revere politicians or other public men, and for the most part believe that any one of them can be a successful leader. They do not think that those they select to be leaders of their own organizations, or the politicians they elect to office, are better qualified than they themselves are. As a matter of fact, they are most likely to believe that the politicians are inferior, that they are generally persons who have turned their hands and talents to something less important than farming.

There is nothing that the typical corn-belt farmer reveres more than hard, driving work and good management. Indeed, the conviction is quite prevalent that anyone who works hard and intelligently can make good, and that anyone who has not made good must have been lacking in one of these personality traits. Moreover, their belief in education and their faith in progress are unqualified. Maintaining that intelligence, and even science, are essential to good production, they regard education as essential for an intelligent participating citizen.

The typical corn-belt farmer also believes in localization. Both the county and township forms of government had been institutionalized elsewhere before the Middle West was settled, and they were quickly established over most of the corn belt. They were, and still are, local governments. Meanwhile, schools and churches were built and maintained by the settlers themselves. And since neighborliness was a necessary and practiced technique, self-conscious neighborhoods existed everywhere in the corn belt.

The worth of a man in the corn belt is measured by the degree of hard work and successful management that he exhibits, but it is also required that he be a good family man, a co-operating neighbor, and an intelligent citizen who votes appropriately. In his citizenship he is supposed to be independent, insurgent if necessary, anti-Wall Street, antibanker, and antipolitician. The Middle Western farmer has demonstrated over and over again that he not only believes that his political representative should truly represent his interests, but also that he needs to organize pressure groups in order to elect and direct, if not dictate to, the members of his government. These pressure groups – the Grange, the Greenback Movement, the Alliance, the Populist Party, the Equity, and the Farm Bureau – have arisen and thrived in the corn belt. They are the techniques and the organizations by which the corn-belt farmers reach out and attempt to influence legislation concerning railroads, packers, grain markets, prices, and credits, all of which operate on a basis that is wider than a local one, but which affect his own economic and social life.

In the last analysis, the corn-belt farmer is a combination of peasant and speculator. Many of those who represent foreign stock actually *were* peasants before they moved into the Middle West. Those who came from the East and the South of the United States would never have called themselves "peasants," but they had a similar deep desire to own their own farms, and they still desire to pass this ownership on to their children. The great mass of them have developed their farms primarily as homes, and they themselves produce a great volume of the goods they consume. In the beginning many of them built their own residences and other farm buildings. Quite generally they still are semiskilled carpenters and blacksmiths, and in many other ways cherish habits and attitudes typical of the stable economic and social life of peasant people. Most of them, however, are also money-makers, for almost from the beginning their agriculture has been a commercial enterprise. They have not only produced for the market, but have also had to expend large funds for the cash costs of production. The value of the farm machinery on a modern corn-belt farm is greater than the value of a total farm — land, buildings, and machinery — in some sections of the country. It is significant that in no area of the nation are farms bought and sold with more rapid turnover than they are in the corn belt. Since early settlement the average farm has been owned by an average of between three and four different persons. By and large it was sold each time for a higher price. The increase in mortgage indebtedness has been almost a steady trend. All of these things — producing for sale, large cash costs of production, high land values, a desire for and accomplishment of a high level of living, and the fact that over the period of years farmers have made money — lead the farmers in a direction exactly opposite that of peasant farming. The result of this turn in a new direction is that there is a spirit of speculation in corn-belt farming. This speculation has taken a number of different forms, for it appears in land booms, cattle booms, absentee ownership of land, mortgaging of owned farms in order to expand holdings, and even in migration from the corn belt to areas farther west, where bigger, more mechanized, more speculative farming could be practiced.

It is not difficult to understand why the Middle Western farmer has the attitudes he has. The rich natural resources and the economic period during which agriculture developed in the belt made progress so easy and so universal that the farmer very naturally believed that anyone who worked hard and managed well could succeed. The fact that people came from the ends of the earth and the vast majority of them succeeded not only made him believe that anyone who did not succeed was "no good," but also gave him an abiding belief in the equality of individuals. The fact that his level of living increased progressively and consistently led him to believe that he was superior to most other farmers, and also to desire and believe that he had a right to a high level of living. The fact that nearly everyone succeeded; that in the early days if he failed once, he could still succeed the second or third time; plus, above everything else, the fact that in the early days vast economic returns accrued from small investments — all led him inside the margins of faith in speculation.

Trends and Directions of Change

Despite the fact that the type of farm production has shown a high and longstanding degree of stability, change is constant and pronounced in the corn belt. It is not only practiced, but expected. It is taken for granted that mechanization and the adoption of scientific practices will move steadily forward; that better education will continue to be the chief guarantor of progress; and that higher levels of living, both materially and culturally, will be attained. Most corn-belt farmers believe that farms will continue to increase in size and the farm population will continue to decrease. But they are beginning to be concerned about the acceleration of soil erosion and mildly concerned about the increase in tenancy. They do not believe that periods of "boom" and "bust" are inevitable, but still maintain, rather, that when depressions do come they are due to the faults of others than themselves.

The increase in tenancy has been going on now for five decades. So far it has done little, if anything, in the way of creating social classes in the farm population. Whether it will do so if some families continue generation after generation to be tenants while other families continue to be owners would be difficult to predict. This may turn out to be a trend that most corn-belt farmers do not foresee.

It is a question whether the recurring cycles of "booms" and "busts" that cause shifts in farm ownership may not be due partially to high capitalization in lands that produce high incomes in periods of booms, to high costs of mechanized operations, and to high material levels of living. On the other hand, these cycles of prosperity and depression have occurred often enough to make one wonder whether they may not be almost inevitable in an agricultural system as commercialized as the one in the corn belt but that is still operated with family-sized farms and that still maintains faith in the operation of the agricultural ladder.

Meanwhile, an increasing number of corn-belt farm operators are doing off-farm work, and an increasing number of nonfarmers are buying farms. Both of these trends have modified the old practice whereby one family lived and worked entirely on one farm and had no other financial interests. That some older farmers stay on their farms rather than go into towns when they retire, and proceed to form partnerships with sons and sons-in-law, may lessen the turnover in farm ownership, keep more of the wealth produced on farms in agriculture, and make it possible for farm families to weather depressions better when they occur. But this tendency will decrease the opportunities for sons of nonfarm owners to buy farms, and might increase, rather than decrease, farm tenancy.

All of these are speculative questions to which there are no sure answers. There has never before been anything in the world like the rural culture of the corn belt, where farmers have attained the highest level of living to be found on any farms in the United States, and the highest in the world for "dirt farmers." A high percentage of the children attend high school and college, but many of them do not return to the farm after they have completed their education. The economy in terms of a prevailing type of farming is pretty well stabilized, but the turnover in farm ownership and personnel is high. Migration from farms to towns and cities, and even out of the corn belt, is great. But the effects of these trends are not easily measured or their future easily predicted. Graham Hutton, a keen foreign observer of corn-belt life, raises some of these same questions and issues in his *Midwest at Noon*. It is significant that, near the end of the book, he answers them with a question:

> Midwesterners are now more on the move, more restless, probably more vigorous, and therefore more dangerous if balked or frustrated, than ever. Their great energies are as yet divided, as their minds and loyalties are confused. In this confusion they are not singular. They are only singular in the wealth of assets with which they can solve their problems. The solutions do not depend on a sufficiency of material means. America has enough and to spare. They depend only on the ability of men and minds to measure up to the problems. An optimistic people, should they be pessimistic now?

CHAPTER 22

THE WHEAT AREAS

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

The Wheat Country

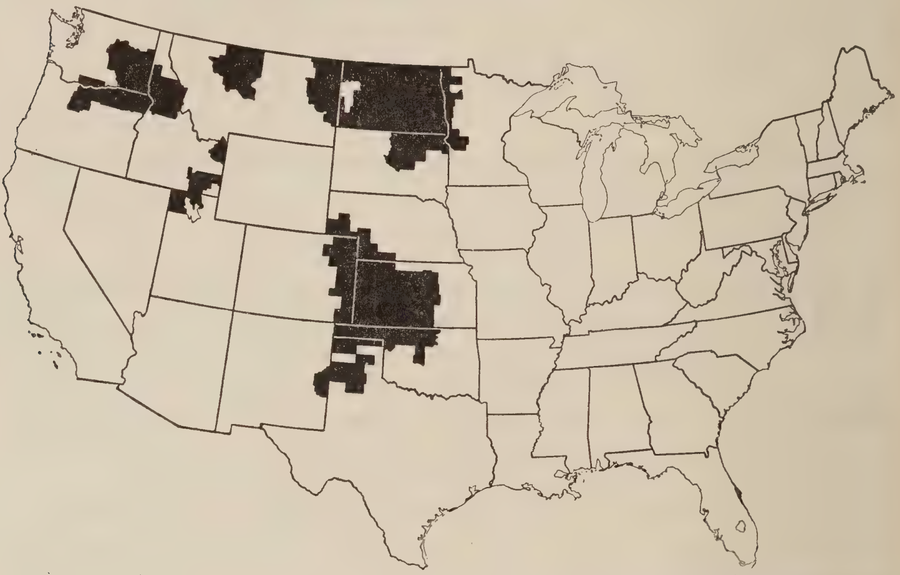
Wheat is grown in practically all farming areas of the United States, but today it is the dominant farm crop in only a relatively small portion of the agricultural area of the country. Indeed, the wheat area discussed here includes only 250 counties and approximately 300,000 farms. Unlike the corn belt or the cotton belt, the wheat belt is not one contiguous area, but, rather, three fairly widely separated areas: the winter-wheat belt centered in western Kansas; the spring-wheat belt centered in North Dakota; and the wheat areas of the Columbia Basin. Although each of these subareas is in many ways a cultural region, there are enough characteristics common to all of them to make them one type-of-farming area.[1]

The country's wheat belt was first located in New England. Then, as people moved west, the center of wheat production moved into areas that now constitute the corn belt. Here it gradually yielded to competition from more intensive types of farm production, and its center gradually shifted to the Great Plains. It is approximately correct to say that in the United States wheat is the dominant farm crop in only those areas where other types of farm production are not physically and economically feasible. Thus, the wheat belt is confined between a line on the east and southeast, beyond which corn, dairy, and cotton production do not find it practical to penetrate, and a line on the west, beyond which the land is so arid that only ranching is possible. Neither of these lines is straight or permanently fixed, however. They are, rather, broad strips or zones within which there is competition between wheat and other types of farming. In these marginal zones the acreage planted to wheat and the volume of wheat production have for many years fluctuated greatly according to rainfall and the price of wheat.

Because wheat is "the staff of life," that is, a major food, it is grown by many farmers even in self-sufficing farming areas, where it is still cradled and threshed by hand. And because it is a grass it was more or less inevitable that the natural grasslands of the country would ultimately become the areas where most of the production of wheat for market sale would be located. But now that large-scale wheat farming has become highly mechanized, it is not feasible to produce wheat in many areas where yields per acre greatly exceed those in the Great Plains. Farmers in mixed farming areas cannot afford wheat machines for the relatively few acres of the crop that they produce. By and large, therefore, extensive wheat farming is carried on only in areas that are suitable for large-scale, mechanized farming.

---

[1] See map (Fig. 41).



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

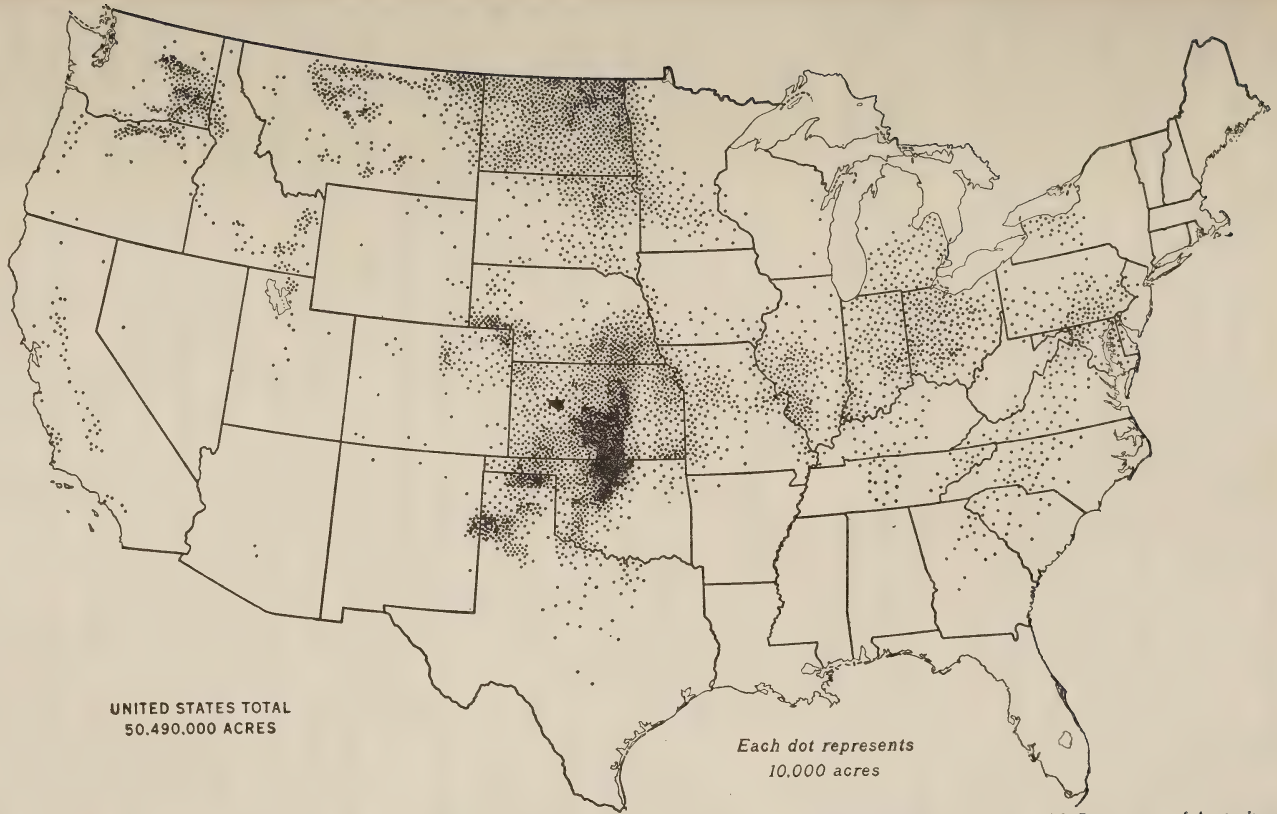
Fig. 41 WHEAT AREAS

More than three fourths of all the wheat produced in the United States is grown in the 250 counties designated here as constituting the wheat belt. Yet, not all farmers in the wheat belt produce wheat. Many produce other grains, dairy products, and garden and specialty crops; and there are farmers in the wheat area who specialize in livestock farming or combine livestock and wheat farming. In fact, in some counties other types of farm products exceed the wheat crop in value. But over the whole belt there prevails a complex of behavior and thinking which is conditioned by the production of wheat, and which is so readily observable that even a stranger going into the area will quickly identify its symbols.[2]

The wheat country is a sparsely settled area with big farms, few large towns, and no large cities. Moreover, farmsteads do not have the ample groves and orchards that are seen in the corn belt. Nor are farm residences framed by groves and surrounded by large barns, sheds, and cribs as they are in the corn belt. Thus they look bleak, even though they are ample, well constructed, and comfortable. Windmills alone break the skyline, and they are only slightly higher than the buildings because there are no obstruc-

---

[2] See map (Fig. 42).


UNITED STATES TOTAL
50,490,000 ACRES
Each dot represents
10,000 acres

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 42 WHEAT HARVESTED

ACREAGE, 1939

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.

tions to keep the wind from reaching the fans. Where the plains are treeless, elevators, which are most often located in the towns, stand out against the horizon in all directions and can be seen for miles. Roads are generally straight, and seem to be endless as they fade from view in the distance or disappear over a hill that may be miles away. The towns also appear drab, although they may be well ordered and clean. The streets are generally wide, and most buildings have only one or two stories, so that the towns look squat and little on the landscape. The scenes just described are not drab, however, to those who live in the plains, for they love the broad vistas and would feel cramped both physically and emotionally if they were robbed of them.

Big farm machines are evident everywhere, either in operation in the vast fields or sitting in the farmyards. In the most extensive wheat areas there are the largest farm machines in the world, and they are operated by men who feel their bigness.

The People and Their Work on the Land

Settlers began moving into the wheat belt in the 1870's, but most sections were not fully settled until after 1900, and some not until after 1910. The settlers came chiefly from Midwestern states and from north European countries. Those who came from other states into the southern, winter-wheat belt came chiefly from the corn belt, although some came from farther east, and a few came from the South. Those who came from Europe were chiefly from Germany and Austria-Hungary. And those who came from other states into the northern, spring-wheat section also came mainly from the Middlewest, and in greatest numbers from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. In this area the Europeans came largely from the Scandinavian countries and Russia. Those who came from other states to the Columbia Basin came chiefly from the Middlewest and from areas farther east. A great many, however, also came from the Great Plains states. The majority of the European immigrants came from Russia. The age of settlement and the ethnic composition of the population are factors that help to explain the social organization and the customs and traditions in the various areas of the wheat belt. But there is probably no type-of-farming area in which rigorous physical conditions and the successful utilization of natural resources have done more to force people of all origins into similar physical, economic, and social adaptations and practices.

In no other major type-of-farming region except the cotton belt does so large a percentage of the people live outside of cities and towns of more than 2,500 population; and in no other region, with the exception again of the cotton belt, is so high a percentage engaged in agriculture. The point is that wheat farms are large, and thus people are scattered sparsely on the land. The density of population in most of the wheat belt is less than six per square mile, including all towns and cities. In 12 per cent of the 250 wheat counties there is one or less person per square mile, and in 40 per cent there are three or less. In many counties some wheat farmers live even farther apart than these statistics indicate, for local areas with general and truck farmers have been included in the averages.

In early days the areas were populated with relatively young people and with many foreign-born. There are still a great many farmers in the wheat belt who are either foreign-born or the sons of foreign-born parents. In fact, in some areas the majority of the farm people are German, Norwegian, or Russian. The population of all the Great Plains is still young in comparison with that of the remainder of the country, and a higher proportion of the total population is under five years of age and a smaller proportion is over sixty-five years of age.

No other type-of-farming area has experienced the same kind of movement of population — what might be called an in-and-out movement — as has the wheat belt. What has happened in the spring-wheat area of western Kansas is an illustration of these population shifts. This area was fairly completely occupied by the late 1880's. But by the middle of the 1890's many counties had lost half of their population because of drought and depression. After the depression the population increased steadily, but with the next series of drought years it again decreased. Professor James C. Malin has compiled and analyzed data from the state censuses of Kansas which indicate that this in-and-out movement has been almost continuous. He discovered that of all the farmers who were in western Kansas in 1895, two thirds were not there ten years later, and that forty years later only one tenth still lived, or had a son living, in the same township. Moreover, of all the farmers who were in the area in 1905, 1915, or 1920, three fifths were not there ten years later. In Montana, part of which is in the spring-wheat area, the farm population decreased by 24,000 between 1920 and 1930, although during that decade 27,665 new homestead entries were made in the state. And in the ten Great Plains states nearly half a million more persons moved from farms than moved to farms between 1830 and 1935.

The largest part of the wheat belt lies on the eastern slopes or flat lands of the Great Plains. Elevation ranges from less than a thousand feet at the Missouri and Red rivers in the east, to about 5,000 feet near the Rocky Mountains in the west. The typical terrain is level or gently rolling. Streams are few and shallow, being fed for the most part by melting snow. Soils are generally fertile, but precipitation is relatively low and variable. Wheat does not grow better in the semiarid areas than elsewhere, but it is the most profitable crop that can be produced in such areas, and they are the most profitable areas in which to produce wheat extensively.

Wheat was not the major farm crop, however, during the first few years of settlement, for newcomers practiced the type of farming to which they had been accustomed in the subhumid areas farther east. It was through trial and error that farmers discovered that dry spells, which caught their corn long before it was matured, occurred after wheat was out of danger. They also quickly discovered that if moisture was sufficient and available at the right time, it was easy to make money out of wheat.

In the first few years of homestead settlement in western Kansas, rainfall was ample and yields were good. Many farmers paid for their homesteads out of the profits of one year's wheat crop. Good seasons did not continue, however. Severe and precarious weather conditions struck quickly. Droughts in the late 1880's, and both drought and depression in the early 1890's, subjected the first group of wheat-belt farmers to those stern physical and economic forces that have ever since dictated the major problems of farming and living in these semiarid areas.

But the farmers began to make an adjustment almost immediately. It was discovered that highly diversified farming was not feasible, but that the enlargement of farms to accommodate extensive wheat and livestock production was. Most of the first settlement was on homestead farms of 160 acres. In the light of the experiences just described, Congress amended the Homestead Law to permit filing on 320-acre farms. These also were too small for the type of farming best adapted to the area. The needed enlargement of farms was finally attained chiefly by combining abandoned homesteads. In the abandonment, however, many of the original settlers left the area. Moreover, it took farmers in the southern, winter-wheat section a long time to learn thoroughly that this area is in the arid margin of field-crop farming. Those who learned that lesson know now that farming and living in the area are still precarious because of the unpredictability of weather conditions, the frequency of hail storms, and the scourge of grasshoppers. They also knew that because wheat is grown almost altogether for market sale, and because their area is in competition with other great wheat-producing areas of the world, even a good crop is no guarantee of good annual financial profit. Because of these stern facts, the life and culture of the wheat belt are considerably different from the life and culture of all other major type-farming areas.

The enlargement of farms was not the only adaptation that wheat farmers made to the stern forces of physical environment. They learned methods of "dry farming," that is, how to conserve precious moisture by summer fallow and stubble mulch, and how to guard against wind erosion by some of these same methods and by strip cropping. In addition, they have adapted new varieties of wheat, and have combined livestock and wheat production. They have come to expect an erratic pattern of good and bad years, of high and low income, and, as they say, to take the good with the bad. They have also learned to use great precision and judgment in planting and harvesting. They know that being a few days too late in seeding may lose some of the benefits of precious moisture; and being a few days too late in harvesting may mean the loss of a crop because of hail or wind. Furthermore, they are today better able to move with precision than they were formerly because wheat farming is so highly mechanized.

It has been only a few years since the extensive wheat-farming areas required tens of thousands of seasonal laborers to harvest the crop. And they had to be migrant workers because they were not needed in the area during the remainder of the year. Indeed, before the development of the combine, some 250,000 outsiders entered the areas and traveled north from Texas and Oklahoma to Canada, moving on from one area to another as the wheat ripened. Today most of the work on the typical wheat farm is done by family labor, except for short peak periods during harvest. Single young men from the locality are normally the principal full-time hired farm workers, and they generally live in the farmhouse with the employer's family. Seasonal laborers must still be employed during harvest periods, but the transient worker is gradually being displaced by the transient combine. Custom combine operators travel north with the harvests, bringing with them the relatively small crews necessary to man the highly mechanized harvest operations.

Wheat production is more highly mechanized than any other type of farming. Machinery was first introduced in "big-team" methods, in the use of gang plows and disks, wide drills, and big binders and headers. Now tractors have displaced horses, and combines have displaced not only binders and headers, but also threshing machines. The so-called "combine parade" of custom operators is a familiar sight. But farms are large, and most farmers prefer to own and operate their own equipment. There is some co-operative ownership of large machinery, and many farmers work together to do their harvesting or harvest their neighbors' crops for a custom fee. Thus, the value of farm equipment on a large farm is well over $2,000 and on the big Columbia Basin farms it is sometimes as high as $35,000. Many farmers even have their own well-equipped shops in which they do their own farm machine repair work.

Cycles of work and rhythms of life in the wheat belt are adjusted to, if not dictated by, the seasonal imperatives of wheat farming. One third of the work required must be done in the comparatively short harvest period, and an additional one half during the seeding period. During the remainder of the year wheat production requires relatively little work, and in areas where wheat is not supplemented by other crops or livestock, there is considerable leisure time. This varies greatly in the different wheat areas, but in wheat farming, as compared with any other major types of farming, the amount of labor is less, and the concentration of work into seasonal peaks is greater. The significance of this fact for the lives and attitudes of people who live in the wheat belt will be pointed out in later sections of this chapter. It will suffice at this point to present a sharp description of the annual rhythms of work in the production of wheat, and to point out differences among the various major sections of the wheat belt.

In the winter-wheat section, which is centered in western Kansas, spring work begins with the preparation of fields for barley, oats, corn, and sorghums. These are not major crops, and the work connected with planting them is not great or hurried. After they are in the ground, machinery is conditioned for the coming harvest, but again this work is neither hurried nor arduous. Then, in late June and early July, the harvest comes with a rush, and for ten or fifteen days all hands in the area, plus a good many who come in from the outside, work furiously to save the wheat. In August there is a short slack period, which is followed for the next month or six weeks by preparation for fall seeding, which takes place in October. Grain sorghums are harvested after the wheat is in the ground. From then until spring there is a long slack period in which "suitcase" farmers leave the area, and "sidewalk" farmers give their attention to their other occupations and professions. Full-time farmers who produce livestock have some work all during the winter, but others who lease their wheat fields for winter pasture have little to do.

In the spring-wheat section, which is centered in North Dakota, farming is more diversified, and farmers are in their fields most of the time from May until October. Wheat seeding is done in April and May, and is followed by the seeding of oats, barley, and flax. The hay harvest is in July, while oats are harvested in August, and then comes the rush period of the wheat harvest. The care of livestock, which must be sheltered and fed during the winter months, requires more work here than in the winter-wheat area, but there is a long fall and winter period during which work is light.

In the northwestern wheat belt — the Columbia Basin, Big Bend, and Palouse country — both spring and winter what are grown, and thus farm work is not so highly concentrated in short seasonal periods. Harvesting is stretched out over a period from July 15 to August 15, because the winter-wheat harvest is followed by the spring-wheat harvest, and the total harvest period is extended by new varieties of wheat which have such stiff straw that they stand up well and thus permit prolonging the harvest period. Seeding of spring wheat is done in April and May, and it is harvested in late July or early August. The practice of growing wheat on the same ground every other year and of fallowing on alternate years requires additional work. In some areas field beans and peas are now used both as a fallow and a market crop. Work in this area is more sustained during spring, summer, and fall than it is in the other wheat areas; but except where some livestock is produced, there is practically no work at all in the winter.

In 1940 the average size of farms in the wheat areas was 531 acres, which is larger than the average in any other type-farming area of the country except the range-livestock areas. There are not so many very large wheat farms today as there were in the heyday of "bonanza" farms, but data from the 1945 agricultural census show that there were fewer farms in that year than there were in 1940 and that the average size had increased to 621 acres. Wheat farms in the Grand Coulee area of the Columbia Basin average 3,000 acres, and some of them have as much as 8,000 acres.

Farm operating units average considerably larger than ownership units because a great many owners rent land to farm in addition to what they own. In the wheat belt, as compared with any other major type-farming region, a higher proportion of farmers are therefore part owners and part share renters. This, plus the fact that so-called "town farmers," both "sidewalk" and "suitcase" types, are prevalent, results in over two fifths of all farmers in the wheat belt being tenants. "Sidewalk" farmers live in the towns of the area, and may be merchants, bankers, lawyers, physicians, or other businessmen, or may in fact have no other occupation or profession than farming. "Suitcase" farmers are persons who live outside the area but own or rent wheat land and come into the area only during seeding and harvest seasons. In some counties nearly one third of all wheat farmers do not live on farms.

"Suitcase" farmers are generally considered by local residents to be pure speculators. "Sidewalk" farmers argue that they have made the best, or the correct, adjustment to extensive wheat farming. They reason that an enterprise demanding careful attention only during two short seasons of the year is not a full-time occupation or profession, and that by having other sources of stable income, they are less speculative than are full-time farmers, whose whole financial destiny rests on the precarious basis of extensive wheat farming. They argue further that since a wheat farm does not require year-round attention, it is sensible to live in towns where they and their families can have the conveniences of schools and churches and the benefits of organized community life.

Groups and Group Relations

Boisterous cow towns, whose sole economic function was to assemble cattle from vast range areas for shipment to the east, were the earliest centers of economic and social life in what is now the wheat belt. When the new settlers arrived they were not welcomed or wanted by the cattle men, and there were no institutions to serve the needs of a settled population. Farm families located on isolated homesteads, built themselves sod or tar-paper houses, and began farming with ox- or horse-drawn implements. They built schools and churches to serve the rapidly increasing population while others established isolated trading centers. But all of these institutions, including many of the small towns, were badly depleted by the exodus of settlers in the face of the first droughts. Many of the early schools were never opened again, and many of the small towns went completely out of existence. And now that the wheat areas have been settled for between fifty and sixty years, it is still difficult to adjust social institutions to the needs of a sparsely settled farm population.

The maintenance of rural schools is a critical problem practically everywhere in the wheat country. There are so few children of grade-school age per square mile that they must either travel great distances in order to attend schools that have a fair number of pupils or attend schools that are operated for only a few children. The one-room country schools have been steadily declining in numbers for many years, and the enrollment in those that are still operated is also declining. Farms are increasing in size, so that farm families live farther apart. Moreover, families are also slowly declining in size, and in most areas a large percentage of them have passed that stage in the family cycle during which there are children of grade-school age at home. Furthermore, in many areas some wheat farmers live in the towns, and their children therefore do not attend the country schools.

Open-country churches have never been as prevalent in the wheat belt as in the older-settled areas of the country. Early settlers generally built schoolhouses before they built churches. Thus, fewer churches than schools have had to be abandoned in periods when people withdrew from the areas. Furthermore, the maintenance of a church requires a larger constituency than does a one-room school, so that even early churches were oftener than not built in the small towns. There are still some well-supported nationality-group churches in the open country, but most churches, like the high schools, are located in trade centers.

The adjustments that wheat farmers are making in order to provide education for their children are various, but they all tend in one direction. These farmers seldom build consolidated schools in the open country and provide bus transportation to them. Instead, they send their children to high school in the towns and pay tuition. The children generally board, but in many instances the family solves both grade- and high-school problems by having the mother move to town for the school year and keep house for both older and younger school children. In some cases, if not in many, the unsatisfactory family life that results under these conditions leads the whole family to move to town. The father and the older sons find it more satisfactory for them to go from the town to the farm than for the mother and children to abandon the farm home during two thirds to three fourths of each year. A few years ago I was shown three hundred houses in a Montana town, all of which, I was told, had been moved in from the large wheat and livestock farms of the area.

Because wheat must be delivered to elevators, which are located in towns, and because all picture shows, most of the churches, and practically all of the high schools are located in trade centers, rural towns in the wheat belt are the chief social centers. In fact, in no section of the country, except for Mormon settlements, do town and country people come nearer to living in self-conscious trade-area communities than do those in the wheat belt. Few rural towns are large, and they are far apart. Each town is therefore something of a rurban social center.

Local rural neighborhoods still exist in the wheat belt, however. For families, although living several miles apart, pay frequent visits to one another; and the exchange work, while not so prevalent as in most other type-farming areas, is by no means purely a practice of the past. Kinship, and especially nationality groups, constitute cohesive neighborhoods; and because these areas were settled comparatively recently, and by a great many foreign-born people, there are a number of neighborhoods and communities that are well-marked cultural islands. According to Anton Anderson of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, a Great Plains neighborhood may include anywhere from five to fifty families, and a community may include from three to seven neighborhoods and a trade center. The neighborhoods have no outward characteristics that make it possible to identify them. They do not, and never did, center in the one-room schools as in the corn belt. But when a farm family is asked to do so, it readily names the neighborhood in which it lives. In fact, the farm families can, and readily do, designate the geographic boundaries of their neighborhood and tell the names of other neighborhoods that bound theirs on all sides. And while these neighborhoods have no formal organization or leadership, the members think of themselves as a group, are influenced by each other, and, as a group, can be influenced by others.

Most communities are not organized, but their members know to what trade center they belong and what other neighborhoods belong to their community. Such communities are not self-contained, even though they do have schools, churches, and a trading center. Modern highways and automobiles have increased competition between small towns, and between small towns and cities. But while a large town may in some ways serve a number of families who belong to trade areas centered in smaller towns, it does not thereby take the place of the smaller town as a community center. It is not primarily trade activities that furnish the basis for community cohesion, but associations in schools, churches, and picture shows, stores, and on the streets. These are what furnish the elements of community life in the small towns.

In a number of cases nationality groups constitute open-country communities, and in some cases religious groups do likewise. In other cases a Farmers' Union or Grange hall is an open-country community center. Although farm people who gather in these halls or in the churches of religious and nationality groups, use trade centers, and even send their children to village high schools, they think of their own halls and churches as the social centers of their communities.

A major part of the social activities of both neighborhoods and communities consists of individual and family visiting. Visiting, however, is not confined to set units of association, and is far more adjustable than are either neighborhood or community boundaries. Highways and automobiles have facilitated broader contacts, and farm families travel a good many miles to visit with friends and relatives. Moreover, in many of the small rural towns commercial recreation is not available, and informal and semiformal visiting among both farm and townspeople takes its place. People go as whole families to one another's homes, hold informal dances, play cards, and do a great deal of casual visiting in stores, on the streets, and at church. In fact, probably no other farm people, unless it be the Negroes in the South and some of the farmers in the Southern Appalachian and Ozark Mountain areas, still retain the art and pleasure of what might be called old-fashioned visiting to the extent that farm people in the wheat belt do. In addition, recreational activities are not so lacking as one who does not know the people might assume from seeing the isolated farmsteads and small towns of the wheat belt. Certainly visiting is recreation, and dinners among relatives, picnics, fishing parties, church suppers, high-school athletic contests, dances, and parties are pleasurable and participated in widely. Moreover, rodeos, which are a carry-over from cattle days, and fairs are spectacular events.

Social class lines, if present, are indistinct in areas where practically all social and economic activities are participated in by all the people. Furthermore, economic stratification is minimized by fluctuating incomes, which may quickly move a person up or down the economic ladder. Religious organizations and foreign-language groups, which were at one time quite prevalent, have largely passed out of existence as cohesive groups. Then, too, there is very little separateness between town and country people, and townspeople are often members of farmer's organizations, and town civic clubs have farmer members. Both town and country people participate in the administration of their common county government, and it is more or less a custom and tradition that farmers shall hold their share of county offices.

What might be called farm-agency programs are quite generally operated altogether by farmers, as is the case in most other sections of the country. Thus the officers of the Agricultural Adjustment program of the Soil Conservation Districts, the Agricultural Extension program, and the vocational agricultural high schools are almost solely farmers, although town business people are deeply interested in these organizations. On the other hand, libraries, hospitals, and even high schools are town organizations run chiefly by town people but used also by farm people.

Wheat-belt farmers have for fifty years been in one revolt after another against market forces that they felt discriminated against them. In the late 1880's and early 1890's the Farmers' Alliance was very strong in Kansas and Nebraska; and the American Society of Equity was strong in the spring-wheat area after 1910. The Non-Partisan League was almost altogether a spring-wheat-area organization. These were all organizations that fought for better prices and "fairer" freight rates. Their attacks were made by means of co-operative organizations and political pressures. Today the Farmers' Union, which emphasizes co-operatives, is a strong general farmer's organization in most sections of the wheat belt.

Attitudes, Values, and Traditions

There are very few ideas about farming and life in the wheat belt that can properly be called traditions. Indeed, erratic curves of production and income, as well as of behavior responses to them, come near to perpetuating the conviction that nothing in the wheat belt is predictable, that everything is speculative. There are, however, some deep convictions, attitudes, and aspirations that are widespread. Probably the deepest of these are that in order to succeed, a farmer must practice every known method of conserving moisture, and that he must be efficient and shrewd. Another of almost equal importance is that if he will not order his expectations in keeping with long-time cycles, and take the bad years with the good, he had better get out of the wheat country.

Everyone in the wheat belt, townsman and farmer alike, is concerned with rain or moisture. In fact, in no area do observations about the weather so completely dominate both casual and serious conversation. A good rain at the right time often alters the economic prospects for a whole year's outlook, while a farmer who fails to practice all the known methods of conserving moisture is considered by the whole community to be either slovenly or lazy. If anyone complains, rather than assuming that he is in the same boat as all others, he is as much *persona non grata* as a tenderfoot in the cattle country. Humor and jokes often center on attempts to alter the stern conditions of climate and weather.

Ideas and sentiments about land range all the way from a deep conviction that "this is the best wheat land in the world," and that the ownership of a large block of it is a mark of social status, to looking at land as a place to plant wheat and "make a killing or go broke." In the Palouse area, where wheat yields are exceedingly high, there has always been a mixture of these two attitudes. But now that the erosive effects of the continuous planting of wheat on even these good soils are becoming apparent, some of the faith in the land is lessening, and a higher regard for its conservation is developing. This does not lessen the pride in its ownership, but it does increase what is generally thought to be the typical farmer's attitude of husbanding that part of the "holy earth" for which he is steward. In the winter-wheat section the absentee or "suitcase" farmer is becoming steadily more unpopular because of his disregard for the land itself and his practice of using it and wheat production as an annual speculative wager on weather. Farmers who live in the area think that the outsider's attitudes and practices are an insult to both the land itself and to what has been learned about how to manage it. They believe that fortitude and practical skills, rather than speculation and gambling, are what is needed, and that anyone who does not have both is a misfit in their country.

Even so, farmers in the wheat belt also believe that there are no perfect rules by which to guide either day-by-day decisions or long-time judgments. They say "some times you do all the right things and still get no crop. At other times you get a bumper crop no matter what you do." They trust experts and scientists so far as genetics and big-machine mechanics are concerned, but they prefer to trust their own practical knowledge and sometimes their mere guesses or hunches. They quite frequently say: "Those college fellows can't outguess the weather conditions of this country." They are constantly on the lookout for new ways of doing things, and accept new discoveries of science just as they do new discoveries of their own or of their neighbors. They are convinced, however, that there is a high degree of speculation about what will and what will not work during any particular year. Those who have lived and farmed in the localities where crop failures have been most frequent say that there is something like a regular long-time cycle, and that if a person can and will ride out the bad years, there will be enough good years during a twenty-year period to make farming profitable and even safe.

There is everywhere in the wheat belt a big-machine complex – a pride in the ownership, operation, and care of big machines. There are even many cases of farmers who have failed because of their heavy investments in machinery. But there are also many who have failed because they did not operate or care for it properly. It is a common saying that machines will wear out before they rust out, or that new machines will make old ones obsolete before the latter either rust out or wear out. Because of these beliefs much machinery is left out of doors and does rust out. The most careful farmers, however, are expert machine operators and do not abuse their big machines in any way. Many of them not only shelter the machines during the winter and during years when there is no harvest, but also, as we have said, have machine shops on their farms, and with their mechanical skills keep their machinery in the best condition possible. Boys of twelve to fourteen learn to operate fairly complicated machines, and take as great pride in their accomplishment as youth in the cattle region do when they become skilled riders. Moreover, while field work is largely a man's job in the wheat belt, some women also have pride in their ability to operate big machines.

As we have seen, cycles of work and leisure are sharply conditioned by the rush seasons of wheat production. There is more leisure than there is in areas of highly diversified agriculture or in the dairy areas, but there are also periods of exceedingly hard work during which the days of labor are long and all leisure-time activities are at a standstill. Naturally there are attitudes attached to these rhythms of activity. Continuous attention to work is not necessary or revered as it is in the dairy belt, and year-round hard work is not a cardinal virtue as it used to be in the corn belt. Still, loafing is not condoned when there is work to be done, and readiness for strenuous efforts at critical times is the mark of a good farmer. Furthermore, mental effort is included in the concept of work, and there is great respect for good management. But it is no disgrace for a farmer to go on a long hunting or fishing trip, or for the whole family to take a vacation trip during slack seasons. It is, in fact, taken for granted that fairly long periods of leisure or semileisure will be utilized for recreation and pleasure. And it is during these periods that farm organizations, churches, clubs, and other groups carry on their social activities. Many farmers in the Columbia Basin leave the area for winter residences elsewhere during the slack season, and town business and professional men who are also farmers live in town as if they had no farming interests. It is also during the slack seasons that families who live on the land do a great deal of the visiting that was previously described.

Familism is pronounced in most areas of the wheat belt, and slack seasons are periods in which the pleasures of the family circle are magnified. Children and their parents who live in cities know little about the home recreation of families who live in comparative isolation, or about the positive friendship of neighbors who make visiting together a constant practice. Familism is not purely a function of leisure, however; it is also a function of the operation and ownership of farms. There are enough stresses in wheat farming to keep a great deal of family conversation centered on farming problems. The long cycles within which successful farming can be accomplished often stimulate father-son farming arrangements that carry over from one generation to another. In fact, children "go to the field" long before they are capable of assisting in field work, and begin to work while they are still quite young. By the time they begin reaching maturity many of them do some farming "on their own." In practically all such cases this is done in partnership with their fathers, who have the equipment for large-scale farming. Entering farming is a fairly large business venture in the wheat belt, so that parental assistance is more necessary than it is in some other types of farming. Thus, the distance between farms, joint family work, and financial assistance to sons and sons-in-law have made familism a recognized and sanctioned practice in most wheat areas.

Attitudes about security are uniform throughout most wheat areas. Although they are tinctured with a degree of fatalism, there is no section of the country in which people believe more thoroughly that success depends on

26. Stacking hay

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Ackerman]

27. Farmers in a mechanized crew harvesting grain

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.]

28. A cowboy at work

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Hunton]

29. Cattle ranch and range in the Yampa River valley, Colorado

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Wolcott] themselves. All members of the family learn to share in adversity and prosperity when they come. They learn the doctrine that "if you can't take it you had better get out." Indeed, they believe that wheat-belt dwellers are something of a cult in their fortitude and democracy; that anyone "belongs" who has proved that he can "take it"; and that among themselves one person is seldom superior to another. They do not therefore depend on leaders, but on themselves. They are accustomed to joining hands in co-operative marketing, in crop insurance, in co-operative telephone companies, and in mutual aid among neighbors and between town and country dwellers. They will tell you that the buffeting of past hard times has weeded out those who could not survive conditions that prevail in the wheat belt, and has left only the rugged, the shrewd, and the efficient. And it is in this belief, as well as in their perpetual aspirations and hopes that the next season will be a good one, that their psychological security resides.

Trends

The history of settlement in the wheat belt has been one of rapid increases in population followed by decreases in some areas and by no further growth in others. As we have said, not all areas were fully settled until about 1910, and the farm population today is approximately the same as it was then. There have been times when the farm population was greater than it is at the present, but there has been much migration out of the area as well as a pronounced movement of people from farms to towns and cities. Nearly all of the states in the Great Plains had heavy losses of total population between 1930 and 1940, while during the last three decades approximately two and a half million people left farms for towns and cities. Thus, there has been a definite thinning of the farm population in the wheat belt; and with increasing mechanization and further enlargement of farms, this trend may continue.

It is a little difficult to imagine greater mechanization than now exists, but there is still some wheat being threshed rather than combined, and there is still some use of horses for power. Furthermore, combines and tractors are still increasing in size, and better combinations of gang machinery are being developed. While bulk, instead of sack, handling of wheat and the transfer of wheat direct from combine to elevators are not yet universal practices, improvements in farming methods have been rapid and will probably accelerate. The practice of strip cropping, better methods of conserving moisture, better and more disease-resistant varieties of wheat, and new methods of soil conservation may be expected as farmers move further and further away from speculative to carefully planned farming. In some areas, like the Columbia Basin, and in others where either gravity or pump irrigation is possible, dry farming will change to irrigation farming. Moreover, in some of these areas there will be a shift from wheat to other types of farming, and in others the precarious weather conditions that plague wheat farmers will be eliminated.

Changes in institutional patterns already under way will also probably be accelerated. In due time the one room country school will be abandoned, and even the primary schools will be consolidated in the country or in towns. If most of them are located in towns, they will probably stimulate an ever increasing number of farm families to live in towns. This movement may be hastened by a desire to have more readily available such institutions and services as hospitals and libraries, both of which are increasing in number, but neither of which can be made easily available to families who are widely scattered.

Finally, there is a trend away from the high degree of speculation that at one time prevailed in wheat farming. In fact, the days of bonanza wheat farming are past except for a relatively few "suitcase" farmers. The recognition of the increasing need for soil conservation, the development of methods of cultivation that will retain moisture, plus the fact that thousands of wheat farmers have now lived in the same localities for a generation or more, all contribute to the stabilization of wheat farming. It will always be impossible to accurately predict weather conditions, and there will always be good and bad years, and even series of them, in most of the wheat areas. But the unpredictability will depend upon forces beyond human control and less and less upon the gambling bent of wheat farmers.

CHAPTER 23

THE RANGE–LIVESTOCK AREAS

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

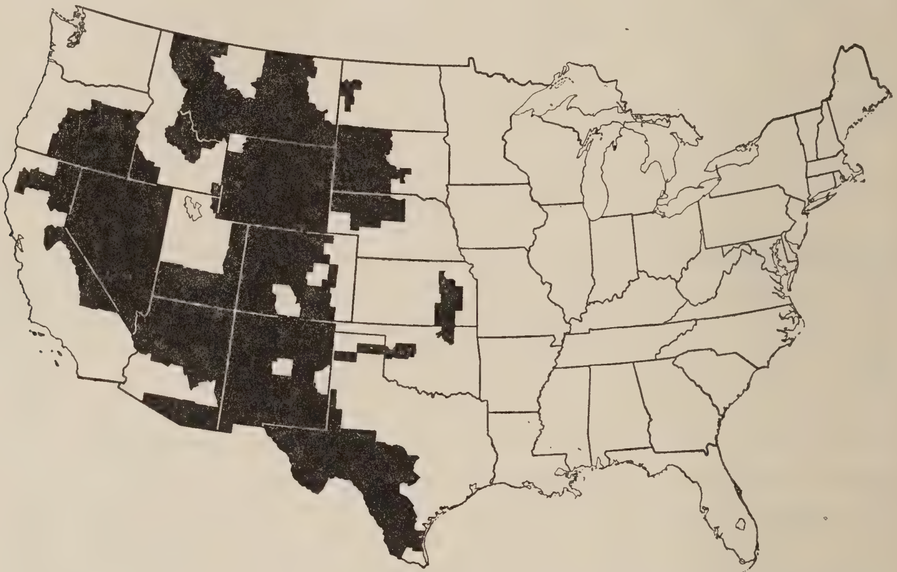
The Range-Livestock Country

THE range-livestock areas are what is left after other types of agriculture have appropriated all lands suitable for their uses. Amounting to about 30 per cent of all lands in the United States, they are located in a band that varies in width from five hundred to well over a thousand miles and that stretches from Mexico to Canada. Less than 14 per cent of the cattle and less than 45 per cent of the sheep of the country are in this band, however, and range-livestock areas and ranching are interspersed with intensive-irrigation farms, forestry, and many kinds of mining industries. The topography includes the roughest and most varied part of the country, ranging from plains below sea level to the highest peaks of the Rockies. The rainfall varies from practically none in the great American desert to seventy inches in certain localities in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The population is also composed of diverse elements. It includes some of the descendants of Coronado's caravan, which came into the Southwest in 1541, and Indians, who were there for hundreds of years before that, as well as some of the most recent settlers in American agriculture. Because it contains what is left of the old cattle kingdom and its more recent sister, the sheep kingdom, it is a country of many cultures. It is important, therefore, that the reader have a fairly good picture of the other economic activities that are interspersed with the various livestock economies. Otherwise he will not understand the social and cultural diversities of the range-livestock areas or be prepared to appreciate the things that are common to all of them.[1]

Starting with the areas that were settled earliest and that are the most southern, we find great diversities even within these. They encompass the big-ranch country of the Edwards Plateau in Texas, the small farms of the Pueblo Indians, and the Spanish American villages on the Upper Pecos River in New Mexico. The latter are best known for their small, irrigated, intensively farmed plots upon which the villagers do subsistence farming. But they are also livestock farmers raising sheep chiefly. The Indian pueblos are best known for their pottery and basket making, but practically all of

[1] See map (Fig. 43).

them, too, are livestock (chiefly sheep) producers. Interspersed among them and controlling most of the grazing lands are some of the biggest cattle men in the Southwest. East of this area is the Edwards Plateau, which is centered in Abilene, Texas. This is a country where ranches are measured in square miles, not in acres, and a few of them contain almost a hundred thousand acres. It is a diversified ranching country, producing cattle, sheep, goats, and even turkeys. Practically all of its owners and operators are of English-American stock, but many of its laborers are Mexicans. West of the Spanish American villages and the Indian pueblos is what is generally known as the Navajo country, for it is centered in the Navajo reservation, which is the largest Indian reservation in the United States. Much of this country is utterly devoid of vegetation, and all of it is arid. The combined Navajo and Hopi reservations contain only 22,500 square miles, or less than fifteen million acres, on which approximately fifty thousand Indians try to make a living. For the most part they are livestock producers who follow their small bands of sheep in a seminomadic fashion over the poor grazing lands at their disposal. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that existing between them and the big ranchers of the Edwards Plateau.



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 43 RANGE–LIVESTOCK AREAS

These three subareas of the southern portion of the range-livestock areas are however only a part of what Russell Smith calls the "Semi-arid Southwestern Intermountain Plateaus," and which he describes as "a vast region" in which "rain is so slight," and "the summers so hot" that not "the farmer and his plow," but "the cowboy with his lariat and leather leggings that keep the cactus from pricking him . . . is the symbol of settlement." It is a land of cactus, of droughts, and of deep canyons, one of which is the Grand

Canyon. It has some irrigation and some mining, but nearly everywhere there is extensive ranching and a sparse population. In fact, it includes the parts of Arizona and Nevada which have a population of less than one person per square mile.

North of this southwestern part of the range-livestock areas is the intermountain area, which runs from Utah to the Canadian border. Its topography varies from many rocky peaks which are more than 15,000 feet high, and a considerable portion of which are above the timber line, to hundreds of valleys that have different altitudes and latitudes and many different types of farming. In the valleys that are too high for agriculture, there is excellent summer grazing; and in the ones that are broad – some of them are in the Big Horn and Bitter Root mountain areas – there is extensive livestock production. In all of these intermountain areas, livestock are pastured at some time during the year. Until fairly recent years some of the foothill grazing ranges ran for hundreds of miles without a fence. Most of the land was federally owned and known as the "open range." And its control by livestock producers was based solely upon prior occupancy. While much of it is still government land, it is now organized into grazing districts, with a great deal of it being apportioned into ranches. The livestock men throughout this broad area come nearer to being the successors of those who were functioning in the days of the old cattle kingdom than any other livestock men of the country, unless it be those of western Texas.

East of the intermountain areas are the ranch areas of the Great Plains, in the eastern margin of which livestock are in constant competition with wheat for use of the land. In this eastern margin big wheat farms and ranches are interspersed, and many farmers are substantial producers of both wheat and livestock. This is the area where the buffalo roamed and in which the romanticized old cattle kingdom operated. The grasses are very nutritious and can be grazed the year round if the range is not overstocked. It is, indeed, one of the great range areas of the world.

Dr. O. E. Baker classifies this area into three zones: (1) the farm-grazing belt in the eastern, more humid part; (2) the grazing-forage belt, in which pasture products are more valuable than crops; and (3) the arid grazing belt, in which crop farming is not feasible. Most of his first zone was described in Chapter XXII as part of the wheat belt. Part of his second zone was also included in the discussion of the wheat belt, where it was described as the wheat belt's most precarious and speculative area. His third zone is big-ranch country, much of which lies in table lands, and runs back into the foothills. The ranches vary in size from a few hundred to many thousands of acres.

The Great Plains ranch area is not so heterogeneous with respect to the composition of its population as the southwestern area, nor is it as interspersed with nonfarm enterprises as either that area or the intermountain section. It does, however, have a number of mineral enterprises and giant oil fields which in certain places dominate economic and social activities. It also is the locale for cities that have been built more as a result of mining than of agriculture. Despite these facts it is this area, together with western

Texas, that comes to the minds of most people when the range country is mentioned.

In order to have a complete picture of this part of the range-livestock areas, one must add to all the geographic-economic facts the background of tradition that has been carried over from the days of the old cattle kingdom into the present ranching era. What is known as the era of the cattle kings started about 1840 and lasted until about 1885. During that period of approximately half a century, there grew up one of the most unique cultures ever developed in this or any other nation. Starting in Texas, it spread north to the Canadian border. It involved a type of farming that covered practically all of twelve states and nearly all of what now constitutes the range-livestock and wheat areas — in short, more than two fifths of the whole area of the United States. How many people made up the personnel of the cattle kingdom and how many range cattle there were in 1885 are not known. But it is known that more than four million head of cattle were shipped east from five shipping centers in the fifteen-year period between 1866 and 1880; and it has been estimated that in 1880 there were almost five million cattle in Texas alone.

The Spaniards who came into the Southwest before 1600 penetrated the edge of the Great Plains, and the considerable impress they left is still recognizable in the Southwest. However, the only contribution they made to establishing a cattle culture in North America was to abandon their cattle when they returned to Mexico. This small number of cattle increased at a tremendous rate on the abundant grasslands of Texas and New Mexico. It was out of the great herds of wild cattle derived from those abandoned by the Spaniards, coupled with the use of horses that both the Spaniards and the Indians possessed, that the cattle kingdom developed.

As W. P. Webb says in his study of the Great Plains, the elements in cattle culture were the horse, the rope, the six-shooter, the cowboy, and the ranch, rather than the ax and the plow, which were the tools and the symbols of pioneering in all other sections of the country. The two divergent types of pioneering met in the Great Plains when the farmers who, aided by the Homestead Law, were moving westward and arrived in western Kansas in the middle 1880's. Fences, the well drill, the windmill, and the law helped the farmers win their battle against the cattle men. Their victory, however, was in some ways not so pronounced as it seemed at the time, for the "plow that broke the plains" not only broke the stubborn sod and helped create dust storms, but also destroyed grass that many farmers now are seeking to restore.

The cattle kingdom did not die without a struggle. Indeed, fence cutting almost created a revolution in Texas, and cattle and sheep men killed not only each other's stock, but also each other. Certainly it has never died in romance and fiction, and probably it never will. The cowboy, the six-shooter, horsemanship, the roundup and rodeo, cattle rustling, gambling, the picturesque attire, the lawlessness, and the feats of lonely and brave men, both outlaws and sheriffs, still constitute themes for songs, novels, and moving pictures of the cattle country. Moreover, the symbols of many of these things can be seen in practically all of the range-livestock areas today. Good horsemanship is revered and practiced; distinctive clothes, notably cowboy boots and hats, are worn by most livestock men and by many others in the areas; and cattle brands not only serve to decorate hotels and other eating places, but are also still used on the range and ranches. There also still exist a marked independence and democratic sociability on the part of the people in all the range-livestock areas where there are no pronounced social barriers such as those in the southwestern section.

The People and Their Work on the Land

A great diversity of people live in the range-livestock areas. In the farm population there are many different ethnic groups, some of which constitute cultural islands. Towns and cities in the ranch country are the seats of such a great variety of enterprises that there is even greater heterogeneity among the urban than among the farm population. It should not be assumed, however, that the range-livestock country is made up solely of cultural islands. Where cultural islands exist, as in the Southwest, it is not because their members are livestock producers, but for other reasons. We can therefore speak of certain population characteristics that are typical of all, or at least the major segments, of the range-livestock areas.

None of the areas were fully settled until around 1900. For the most part they were settled by native-born Americans from all over the country, by relatively young persons, and mostly by men. Thus, until recent years the ratio of men to women has remained very high, and most of the men have been middle-aged. It was only with the coming of automobiles and the development of good roads that more women moved into the area, bringing with them more young people. While older men have become more prevalent as the early cowboy days passed, there are still many relatively young men in the farm population. As for the foreign-born, the number of these in the farm population in 1940 was not high, except in the northern Plains and western Texas; it was, in fact, quite low in the Southwest and intermountain areas.

In the range-livestock areas, as in the wheat belt, and for somewhat the same reasons, there has in recent years been a pronounced movement of people away from farms — a movement resulting in a decrease of the farm population that ranges from 20 per cent to more than 40 per cent. The pronounced exceptions are the areas occupied by the Spanish Americans and the Indians, for among these there has been a steady increase in population. Those who left farms went, for the most part, into near-by small towns, from which they can still manage their ranches. As a matter of fact, one of the surprising things about the range-livestock areas, great open countries that they are, is that the percentage of their population classified as rural-nonfarm is higher than that in any other type-of-farming area of the country. Many of these rural-nonfarm people are engaged in mining, but many of them are also ranchers and their families who live in towns that are too small to be classed as urban centers. Of the slightly more than 3,700,000 people who lived in these areas in 1940, approximately 1,310,000 were in the rural-nonfarm population. In 1939, more than 15 per cent of all farm operators did a hundred days or more of off-farm work.

Throughout the range-livestock country there are a great many big operators. In fact, in 1939 the percentage of farms whose products valued $4,000 or more was higher in these areas than in any other type-of-farming area except the Western specialty-crop areas. Incomes, however, vary greatly from year to year, and many large cattle and sheep producers have been semimillionaires more than once, and have also failed more than once. Almost half of the ranchers, in all except the Spanish American and Indian areas, operate over a thousand acres of land; and in the big ranch areas their lands average nearer three thousand acres. Moreover, the percentage of range-livestock operators who are managers, rather than tenant- or owner-operators, is also higher than in any other type-of-farming area, with the exception again of the Western specialty-crop areas.

The level-of-living index for all livestock areas is only 105, but is much higher than that in all local areas except those occupied by the Spanish Americans and the Indians, where it falls to 62 and 19 respectively. In most other areas, in fact, it ranges from 110 to 120. A relatively low percentage of farm products are used by farm households — only 8.3 per cent as compared with the wheat belt's 9.2 per cent, which is also low, and the 14.5 per cent for all farm areas of the country. In other words, farmers in the range-livestock areas buy most of their food. They also spend money liberally for other things, such as clothing, automobiles, recreation, and education (both high school and college). Few ranch homes, and by home the rancher means his dwelling, are large or ostentatious, although there are exceptions. Certainly they are modest in the north, where they are sometimes built of logs; and in the south they may be adobe. If they have electric lights they must be supplied by an individual Delco plant. In most areas grass is not easy to grow, so that the ranch headquarters may look very squat and bleak on the far landscape. Moreover, there are generally few other farm buildings — only the sheep-shearing shed, corrals, and maybe a dipping vat.

Work with cattle is today very different from what it was during the reign of the old cattle kingdom. Then it was done largely on horseback and on the open range, and involved great cattle drives to shipping points hundreds of miles distant from some ranges. To be sure, branding and castrating still have to be done on foot, and the cowboy is still skillful with horse and rope during roundups. Now, however, the cowboy must care for fences, windmills, and tanks, and he often makes his rounds of duty in an automobile. He isn't as solitary as he was when he herded cattle on the open range, but neither is he ever the member of such large, organized gangs as the ones that drove great herds from Texas to Abilene, Kansas, or from some far place in the plains to Dodge City, Kansas.

Work with sheep has changed less than that with cattle, because sheep are still much more often herded than are cattle, and they are more often grazed at great distances from ranch headquarters. In the foothills and mountain areas they travel steadily to higher elevations as the summer comes on, and the herder must go with them, moving his camp or chuck wagon to one grazing area after another. He is often away from headquarters for months, and works in just about as great solitude as he ever did, with his chief companions being his dogs. He is his own boss and must be a responsible person. While a steadily increasing proportion of shearing is done by machine, shearing machines and dipping vats are the only two outstanding labor-saving devices that have greatly changed work with range sheep.

Although they vary in different parts of the range-livestock areas, there are definite work rhythms in ranching. They are dictated by the physical needs of the animals and by the cycle of seasons. Thus, lambing, castrating and docking, dipping, and shearing follow definite time routines on each sheep ranch. If the sheep are moved to higher elevations during the summer, these long trips, too, follow a seasonal rhythm. In the Southwest there is year-round grazing, but hundreds of thousands of sheep are shipped into the winter-wheat belt for grazing, and the herders travel with them. Even the marketing of lambs, although it may fluctuate somewhat because of prices, is likely to be done during a definite period of the year. Moreover, the rhythm of work on a cattle ranch is both daily and seasonal. The one high point in the seasonal rhythm is the roundup, when calves are castrated and branded, and when cattle may be culled for shipment to fattening areas. The daily routine consists of caring for wells, windmills, and tanks, distributing salt, riding the fences and checking the various herds when they are scattered over the ranch, and moving them from time to time from one large pasture to another. Where forage crops are produced for winter feed, they require additional and different work. Then there is also seeding, haying, and feeding to be done. And in the eastern zone of the ranch country, wheat and even corn production add all the types and rhythms of work described in the chapters on the wheat and corn belts.

Caring for livestock is almost entirely a man's work. Women may or may not cook for the extra men who are required during the roundup, and they may help out during lambing season. By and large, however, they have little part in the manual work of ranching. At headquarters and when concerned with the overhead management, they are generally capable of handling things quite competently while the husband is away, and he is quite often away on business trips that require his absence for days at a time. Children cannot help much either until they are old enough to ride fences or to help herd sheep. For there are few "chores" on a ranch, and it is not so easy here for a boy of ten or twelve to work beside his father or older brother as it is in a corn or cotton field or in a dairy barn.

Ranching is a serious business, with much work and many financial problems. Those who engage in it on the thousands of ranches that comprise the range-livestock enterprises of the West have very little concern with the cowboy lure and the trappings of the "dude" or luxury ranches. The dude ranch is often little more than a summer hotel with livestock and cowboys added for local color. The luxury ranches are primarily the country residences of wealthy urbanites, some of whom are foreigners, and they are used for the recreation of the owners and their guests. A few ranches take in guests as an incidental source of income, but the vast majority are operated as cattle and sheep enterprises in which there is a lot of hard routine work. In the north most of this work is done by ranch families with the help of a few hired hands. In the Spanish American and Indian sections, women and children participate in the work. In the remainder of the Southwest hired laborers of Mexican, Spanish, or Indian origin do most of the manual labor.

Groups and Group Relationships

In areas where the population is sparser and more scattered than it is anywhere else in the country, the rural social organization is quite different from that in other farming areas. And the density of population in the range-livestock areas is less than half that in the wheat belt, where we have noted that it is difficult to maintain some of the normal social institutions and services. Local communities and neighborhoods cover large geographic areas and counties, although they are generally sizable, are not the primary units of social action. Nevertheless, the farm people who live in the range-livestock country live within and use organizations to almost as great an extent as do farm people elsewhere. And while towns play a large role in organizational life, there are also well-recognized communities and neighborhoods.

When a town is referred to as a "cattle town," it may be taken for granted that it is one of the larger towns serving a wide geographic area. San Angelo, Texas, Miles City and Great Falls, Montana, and Sheridan, Wyoming, are a few of these well-known cattle towns. Within the broad trade areas of these larger towns are many small trade centers and residential towns, and many people live in towns that are so small they are classed as rural-nonfarm areas.

Miles City, Montana, is an outstanding example of the role that a small city plays in the ranch country. Its population is less than 7,500, but it is literally the economic and social capital of all of southeastern Montana, as well as the social center of Custer and adjacent counties. Most of the livestock from a large area is marketed in Miles City at weekly auctions. There are only three high schools in Custer County, and two of them are located in Miles City. The Miles City Club, which is closely associated with the Stockgrowers' Association, claims to be the oldest social institution in eastern Montana. There are also a small junior college, four churches, Eagle, Elk, and Masonic lodges, farmer's associations, and picture shows, all of which serve the farm population occupying thousands of square miles of ranch country located around the city. As the county seat it is the headquarters of all welfare, health, educational, and other government activities; and it is the chief social interaction center for people who come a hundred miles or more from all directions to trade and visit.

Great Falls is an illustration of the mixture of ranching and urban influences. It is a city of 30,000 population, has a number of up-to-date picture shows, and supports substantial hotels, one of which is a popular place for national conventions. There are also bars and gaming places maintaining a semblance of the traditions and practices that at one time made Great Falls, along with Deadwood (South Dakota), Dodge City (Kansas), San Angelo (Texas), and other towns famous as a frontier cattle town. All of these larger towns are the financial and business centers of large livestock areas, as well as the social centers for ranch-operator families. And each, having its well-recognized population constituency, is thus the center of a type of social and economic organization.

The smaller towns are community centers, with each serving a fairly well defined geographic area. Certainly in areas where physical factors such as canyons, mountains, and large streams are definite barriers to transportation, these smaller town-centered communities are very definite geographic areas and highly self-conscious social entities. As Anton H. Anderson, who has mapped a number of these sociogeographic areas, says, "In a county traversed by several parallel canyons the neighborhood and community map shows the unmistakable influence of the terrain. The same thing has often been noted about streams, hills, and highways. These physical features are the framework within which cultural, institutional, and associational factors operate to establish the group pattern."

Within these town-centered sociogeographic communities there are neighborhoods that may follow minor topographic features, kinship relations, or socioeconomic class lines. But throughout the range-livestock country, except for those parts occupied chiefly by the Spanish Americans and the Indians, the areas of association are geographically much larger and the social group membership much smaller than they are in thickly populated sections of the United States. These conditions, however, are not deterrents to people who in earlier days were used to traveling considerable distances by horseback, and who now in a single day travel in automobiles to and from a large trade center as much as two hundred miles away, or who go a hundred miles to a picture show or dance and return home the same night.

Moreover, people know everyone who lives within miles of them, and generally know where others are and what they are doing almost daily. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a person to be saved a trip to a distant ranch by hearing from someone who lives fifty miles away from there that the rancher is not at home because he has gone to a certain place to do a particular thing. News of sickness, misfortune, or good fortune in one ranch family generally spreads to everyone in the local area, and mutual aid is practiced over the whole territory of large neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are definitely not dead in the ranch country. In Custer County, Montana, for instance, there are eighteen of them, and each is clearly recognized by the people who belong to it.

Informal associations are probably more wholehearted in most ranch areas than elsewhere, but social service institutions operate under severe difficulties. Local district schools, for example, must serve areas of such size that transportation to and from them is necessary. In fact, before the coming of the automobile it was more or less a standing joke that longer horses were needed so that all the children of one family might ride to school on one horse. Schools maintain horse stables or sheds to house the horses that the children ride to school. Even more frequently than in the wheat belt, children attend town schools, even though it means that the mother or the whole family must move to town for the school year. The high schools are all located in the towns, and generally in the larger ones because it takes the population of a large geographic area to provide enough high-school pupils for even a minimum-sized high school. The one- or two-room district school is having difficulty surviving – even more difficulty than in the wheat belt. In Lyman County, South Dakota, for instance, there were only 42 per cent as many of them operating in 1945 as in 1940.

Open-country churches are literally nonexistent in most of the range-livestock areas. Moreover, they are few in number even in the small towns, since the population adjacent to these towns is not great enough to support very many church organizations. Because there are so few churches in the ranch areas, and because Sundays are so often used for recreation, a great many persons are under the impression that most people in ranch areas are nonreligious. It is doubtful, however, that this belief can be verified; whereas there can be no doubt about the difficulty of maintaining and operating churches in areas where people live far apart, and where the normal population necessary to maintain a church occupies hundreds of thousands of square miles.

Efficient hospitals and libraries require even a larger population constituency than do churches, and much larger constituencies than do schools. Therefore they are perforce located in the larger towns. In such places they are most often thought of as urban institutions that belong to the townspeople. It is interesting, however, that two of the outstanding co-operative health organizations in the country are in areas of sparse settlement, one being the co-operative hospital at Elk City, Oklahoma, and the other, the Sand Hills Health Association in northern Nebraska. In both of these co-operative health enterprises, farm people furnish the majority of constituents. There are no similar examples with respect to libraries and library sources.

General farmer's organizations, such as the Grange, the Farmers' Union, and the Farm Bureau have not been chief agencies of economic and social organization in ranching areas, probably because their locals are more often than not community, township, and county organizations, no one of which is as characteristic of the range-livestock areas as it is of areas elsewhere. There have, however, always been outstanding producer's associations in the ranch country, beginning with anti-horse-thief associations, and ending with powerful livestock producer's pressure groups. There are also shipping and marketing associations, grazing associations, soil conservation districts, and everywhere the county Agricultural Extension Service.

What might be called the more elite social sets in the range country operate over exceedingly wide areas. Not only the ranchers themselves, but also their wives and older sons and daughters, belong to social sets whose members live in local areas that are hundreds of, and sometimes a thousand, miles apart. These social sets and their patterns of association, like all other types of association in the range-livestock areas, are natural responses of people who live in a sparsely settled country where distances are great, but who do not allow these things to thwart human contacts and associations entirely.

But it is family life and visiting that are the chief and most meaningful types of association in sparsely settled areas where all other forms of social organization are handicapped by distances. Ranch families live from fifteen to fifty miles apart, and each family is therefore a pronounced social unit. Most ranches are owner-operated, and all members of the families have an interest in them. Children leave home to attend high school and college, but this does not, as in the corn and wheat belts, result in the permanent exodus of young people. Most of the sons of ranchers return and enter ranching with their fathers. The physical isolation of the ranch family leads to a great deal of interfamily and other types of visiting, much of which takes place in the small towns as well as in the larger towns among people from over a wide area. In all such towns there are taverns and bars that are literally the informal social centers of ranchmen, while their wives and daughters visit on the streets and in the stores, and in some cases in organized clubs.

The Southwest, however, is an exception to most of these generalizations. To be sure, the large English-speaking ranch families participate in these patterns of association just as they do in other ranching areas. And the fact that they do less of the manual labor than their counterparts in the northern areas enables and encourages them to participate more in leisure-time and other types of purely social activities. But there are more people in the Southwest who do not participate in the activities and associations of the big ranch operators. They are the hired men, the Mexicans, the Spanish Americans, and the Indians, or they are culture groups who work and live in organizations of their own. In each of these situations, not only is there a pronounced class structure that does not exist in the northern areas, but also livestock production is carried on by the minority or culture groups in quite a different way than it is carried on elsewhere.

Among the Navajo and Hopi Indians, and to a considerable extent among some of the Pueblo Indians, livestock culture, especially that of sheep, is very old. But in earlier days sheep were not produced for the purpose of marketing wool or mutton. Rather, they were produced as a means of subsistence farming. Wool was used for making wearing apparel, blankets, and rugs; hides were used for making saddles, leather, thongs, and a number of other things; the mutton was consumed at home. The life of the family, clan, and tribe was not, however, built around and out of livestock production. For the important — indeed central — products were squash, corn, and beans. In comparison to the culture associated with these, the livestock culture is of relatively recent origin. Furthermore, the Indians have their own religion, their own system of education, their own types of homes, and their own systems of landownership and operation. They do not, therefore, participate in either the types of organized life that prevail among white people, or in many of the attitudes and values that are held in white man's culture. They live in different kinds of houses, and in other ways that aren't reflected in the level-of-living index, which for the Navajo people is 19, in comparison with 100 for the United States as a whole, and 115 or 120 for some other parts of the range-livestock areas.

The Spanish American people combine some of the elements of Anglo culture with some of the elements of their own. Most of them still live in village settlements, and carry on subsistence farming on small, family-owned, irrigated plots; but they also carry on fairly extensive sheep production on their village-owned grazing or mesa lands, or through a share-cropping arrangement with big white operators. In addition, they do a great deal of wage labor in activities other than farming. Most of them are devout Catholics, and the village church is the main center and directive of their social life. Their groups, however, are not so tight or cohesive as the Indian groups, and they encompass in their standards of living many of the goods, services, and practices of the Anglos.

To describe and analyze the many interesting and unique types of behavior that prevail among either of these two important ethnic groups would be to discuss things that are not germane to typical rural life in the range-livestock areas of the United States. Such a discussion would be of livestock production as it is carried on by people with cultures that are different from ours. While this would be sociologically valuable, it would be more pertinent to a discussion of the pastoral cultures of the world, which are many and interesting, than to a generalized discussion of the rural life in a part of this country.

The same cannot be said, however, of those areas in which Mexicans do most or all of the manual labor on the ranches, live in localities that are segregated from the homes of the whites, and attend separate schools and churches. They do not, of course, participate in the same organizations or activities as white owners, and they themselves are seldom ranch owners. They constitute a minority and a group separate from the Anglos, just as the Spanish Americans and the Indians do, but their groups are not organized cultural islands. Their position in the areas where they live and work on ranches is, rather, like that of nonentrepreneur ethnic groups wherever they are the hired laborers of others. In fact, they are not a part of the white man's society that has been discussed here; nor is there anything about their situation that is peculiar to range-livestock culture.

In addition to the Spanish American and Indian livestock areas, a few segments of the Mormon settlements are in the range areas. Mormon ranchers follow all the economic and production techniques of other white ranchers, but they are much more likely, if not almost certain, to make livestock a part of a mixed farming system. The ranchers may or may not live in villages, but they are always a part of well-organized communities, and their organizations, associations, and traditions follow the lines of a culture that has never been primarily associated with livestock farming.

In the intermountain, and especially in the Great Plains, areas, co-operative or collective grazing associations have become prevalent. Taylor Grazing Districts, soil conservation districts, and collective tenure groups have been organized to lease, purchase, or otherwise control and manage large areas of grazing lands, to issue grazing permits, and to protect the range. They are not primarily social organizations, but they are of great agronomic importance. Moreover, it is interesting that in the wide-open country, at America's last frontier, there should develop a system of communal pasturing similar in purpose to the village commons of the early New England colonies.

Attitudes, Ideals, and Values of the People

The most dominant element in the value system or sentiment of ranch people is their love for their own way of life. Thus, a Texas rancher has said: "We know we do less work and live better than any group of people in the world. We wouldn't trade this country for New York State, including New York City, if we had to go there to live." But it is not only leisure and a relatively high material level of living that makes the people love their areas and their way of life. They genuinely love the wide-open spaces, the great sweeps of distances and vistas, and some of the elements that were a part of the old cattle kingdom, such as horsemanship, big operations, and the privileges of independent personal action.

A second thing that is highly valued is managerial ability. Whether a rancher spends all his time on the business or managerial phases of operation, or whether he shares in the manual labor, he must be a good manager. More particularly, he must be shrewd in making short-time decisions, and wise in making long-time decisions. One cannot switch in and out of livestock production quickly, and, furthermore, the results of a decision made today may not become apparent until three or four years later. Livestock men are not noted for conservatism in business activities, so that shrewd business judgment is all the more important because of the risks involved.

Attitudes about economic security are not pronounced. Some producers frankly say that ranching is always a gamble, and many of them have been up and down several times during their business careers. The shadow of drought hangs over most of the range-livestock areas, and the memories of the early and middle 1930's are still fresh in the minds of most ranchers. They saw both cattle and sheep being shipped out of their areas by the tens of thousands because the range had turned to desert. They saw thousands of others die for lack of water and grass. In fact, in the arid regions of the Southwest men talk of farming in the desert, and livestock men are as rain-conscious as the wheat farmers in the Plains. All the Indian tribes in the Southwest have dances and other ceremonials to propitiate or supplicate the gods of rain. White operators, not putting their faith in miracles or magic, make sure that their ranches include a water hole or some other source of water as trustworthy as possible. They use all the knowledge they have of the elements with which they must work, but they do not feel too secure about their capacity always to succeed. Their attitude about security is probably best expressed in the statement: "We learn to take the bad years with the good, and if we go broke during the bad years, we will come back during the good years."

Most ranchers do not welcome outsiders in the ranch business. They say that the newcomer is either a plunger or is all hustle and doesn't know how to live their kind of life. Nor do they like the idea of federal government control, especially government regulation, of so much land. For a long time they used the free range and made their own rules for its allocation and control. Therefore, they don't like the specifications laid down in grazing permits and the government's supervision of how heavily the land may be grazed. They are interested in preserving and restoring the grass cover after the damage done by a series of drought years, but their love of independent action forbids that they should condone government regulations.

The independence of a rancher does not mean that he is unsociable. Indeed, he has a reputation for quite the opposite, and both in theory and in practice he treats others as his equals. While hospitality is an art in the range country, it is more a matter of democracy than of proprieties. As for the women, they enjoy the position of veneration common to areas where men are in surplus. Moreover, the status of women hinges on a tradition that goes back to pioneer days, so that even the roughest cow hand knows how to treat a lady. His sentiments toward women have been recorded in so many of his songs that they are a part of the lore of the range country.

As a matter of fact, no other farm section of the country has as large a body of song literature and art — some of it authentic and some of it fictional — dedicated to its ways of life as does the range country. The Lomaxes have recorded not only the words, but the music of hundreds of cowboy songs. And Chittenden's *Ranch Verses* and Dobie's *Texas and Southern Lore,* are other authentic pieces of literature. Hollywood has revamped and staged practically all the traditional stories of the old cattle kingdom, and both W. P. Webb and E. E. Dale have written authoritative histories of the Plains. Public buildings and large hotels contain good murals of range life, and reproductions of cattle branding have been made into frescoes at many places. Many Westerners know all these things and can tell you about them. They are a part of the literature, the art, and the folk lore of their country.

Trends

Broad trends in the range-livestock areas are not easy to identify because of the diversity that exists between the various parts. Predictions are precarious, because ranching is so often carried on in marginal land, using areas that are not stabilized. It is apparent, however, that there has been a thinning of the farm population as a shift in population from farms to small towns takes place. It is probably true that there is less speculation and gambling than formerly. There has been a noticeable increase in mechanization in terms of windmills, tanks, electric fences, and in the use of automobiles to replace horses. Sooner or later it is probable that service institutions such as hospitals and libraries will cause each small city to develop into a focal institutional center. There is also a lot of thought being given to, and some accomplishment being made in, organizing fairly large range areas in conjunction with well-watered valleys in order to stabilize land use and the settlement of these areas. If and when that happens planned large communities along water courses or in well-watered areas will perform the function of fairly large towns, and thus largely solve the problems of institutional services. Lastly, it is to be expected that more and more ranch lands will be converted to intensive farming as irrigation is extended.

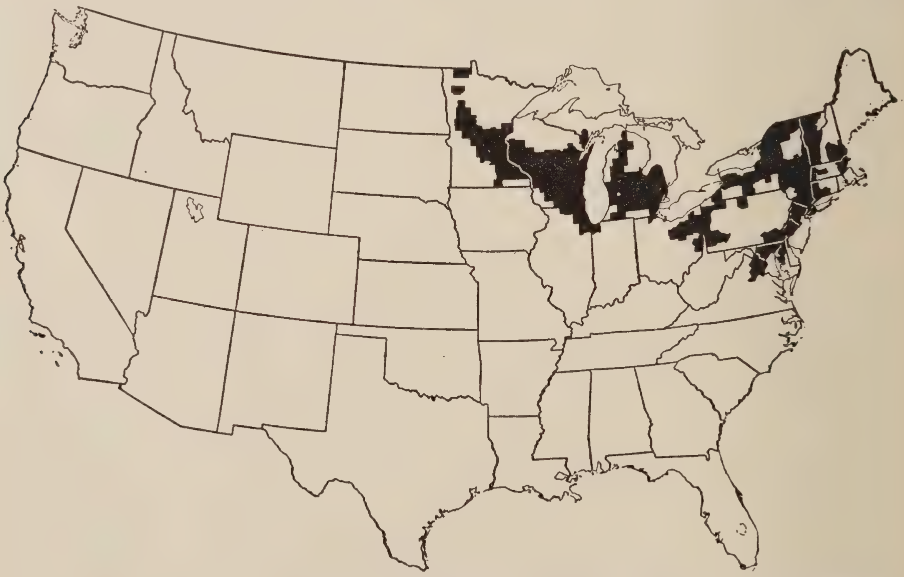
CHAPTER 24

THE DAIRY AREAS

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER

The Dairy Country

Although many a settler family took a cow along, and although a cow on the landscape is now one of the most universal pictures in rural United States, the milk production of the nation is noticeably concentrated in the Eastern and Northern parts of the country. The high milk-producing areas of the United States are delineated as the dairy areas for this discussion.[1] These areas coincide in general with those in which there is a high density of population.[2] The four largest cities of the country, and nine of the fourteen next largest cities, are in the dairy areas. There are scattered smaller sections of the country in which the dairy industry is lo-



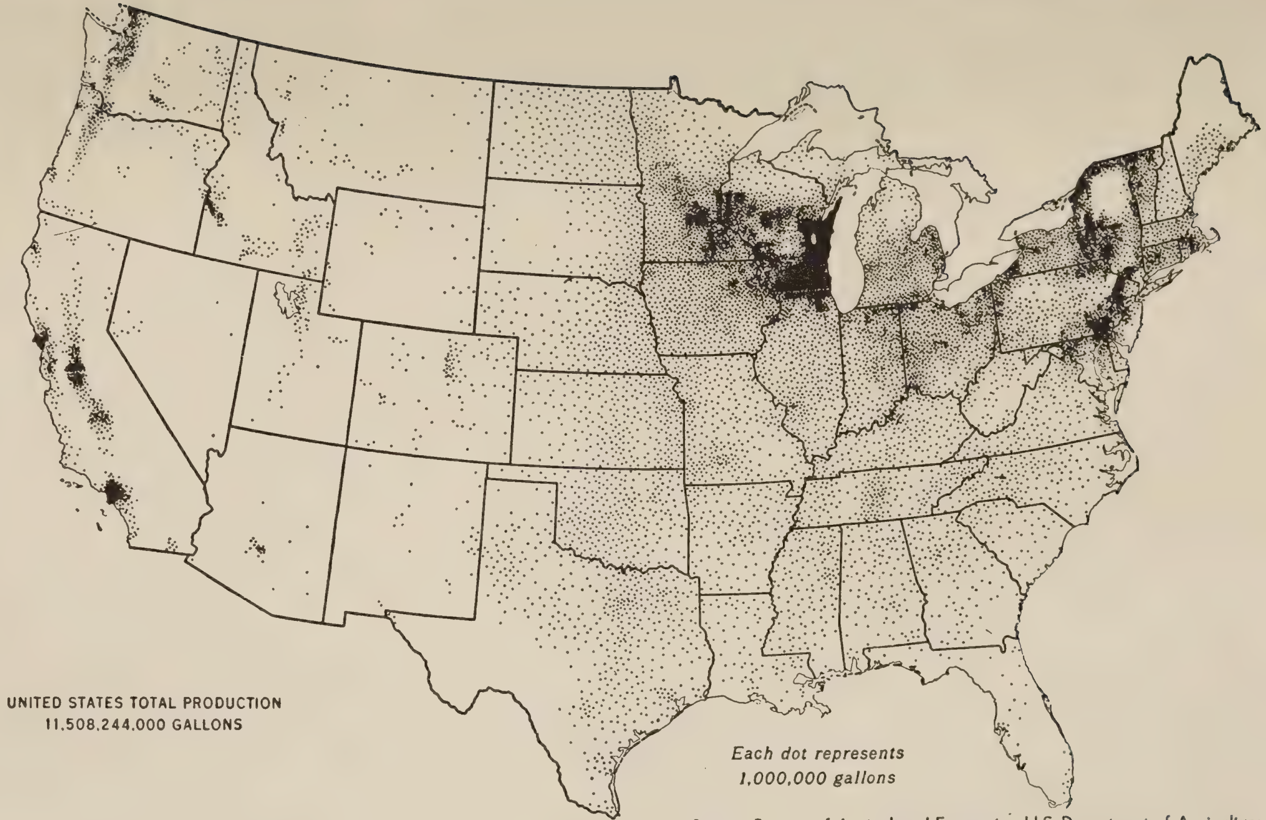
Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 44 DAIRY AREAS

---

[1] See map (Fig. 44).

[2] See map (Fig. 45).


UNITED STATES TOTAL PRODUCTION
11,508,244,000 GALLONS
Each dot represents
1,000,000 gallons

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 45 MILK PRODUCED ON FARMS, 1939

Base figures are from the Bureau of the Census.

cally important, but which are not included in the dairy areas, such as some sections in the far Northwest and in the environs of many of the largest cities outside the areas. Here rural life is affected by dairying in much the same way as within the areas. Wherever milk is produced, there are the inevitable twice-a-day milkings, the need to maintain sanitary standards, the advantages of using scientific methods, a steady income throughout the year, and the close contacts of the farmers with market outlets and supply dealers. All of these conditions influence the practices, standards, and beliefs of dairy farm people.

In the 268 counties that compose the specialized dairy areas, the farm population is proportionately smaller and the urban population proportionately larger than in any other major type-farming region in the country. To be sure, some sections of the Midwestern dairy country are predominantly rural, but for the dairy areas as a whole, only a little over one tenth of the total population live on farms, two tenths live in villages and hamlets or in the open country as nonfarmers, while the remaining seven tenths live in cities. Thus, as compared with rural life in any of the other major type-farming areas, rural life in the dairy country is most closely related to life in towns and cities, and has the most urban characteristics.

Commercial dairying requires accessibility to markets, availability of good pasture and other feed, and the willingness of the farm family to work every day of the year and to give continuous attention to details. To make a success of dairying, the members of the family must have in addition to a reasonable amount of dairy know-how, a personal dedication to dairying. It is a combination of these factors that determines the outlines of the dairy country, and also the particular manner in which the dairy product will be marketed, that is, whether it will be for drinking, cheese making, butter making, or for the manufacture of some specialty dairy product.

Fluid or market milk is the chief dairy product near the large cities in the dairy sections of New England and New York, and in the Philadelphia-Baltimore-Washington milk shed, the Allegheny highlands of western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, and the Chicago-Detroit region. In many of the more rural parts of the fluid-milk sections, however, and especially in Wisconsin and Minnesota, butter and cheese dairying predominate. The costs of milk production are generally higher in the older, eastern parts of the dairy areas, where much feed must be imported from the Middle West, where land naturally produces trees rather than grass, and where competent dairy labor is always moving off toward the available urban employment nearby. Production is cheaper in the western sections, where grasses and grains are most abundant, markets are farther away, and transportation costs are greater; and so less of the milk is sold in fluid form.

By no means are all of the farmers in the many parts of the dairy areas doing dairy farming. Some specialize in poultry, in fruits and vegetables, or in other specialty products; and in some localities general farming, in which no one farm product is dominant, is most pronounced. Moreover, many nonfarm families live in the open country among the farmers. This rural nonfarm element of the population is greatest in the populous eastern and central parts of the areas, and, in fact, often accounts for more than a third of the total population. In many dairy counties the rural-nonfarm population far outnumbers the people who make a living by farming. Most of these rural-nonfarm people live on small acreages and commute to industrial employment. The network of all-weather roads makes it easy for open-country dwellers to get to and from work in the numerous towns. The country estates of wealthy urban families are also common in some of the more scenic sections of the dairy country near the large cities. Many lakes attract tourists in the summer, and the winter snows bring skiers. The dairy country, the most northern of all the major type-farming areas, is also the most accessible to the nation's largest metropolitan centers. All of these conditions result in powerful influences other than those of dairying being present in varying degrees in many parts of the dairy areas, and especially in the eastern and central portions.

The variations in rural life in the various localities of the dairy areas are striking, whether looked at in terms of length of settlement, type of local government, the proportionate value of milk to all farm products, the average size of dairy herds, the form in which the dairy products are marketed, the breed of dairy cattle that is most common, or the proportion of the rural dwellers who do nonfarm work. But overshadowing the variations between and within the different parts of the dairy country are a number of general characteristics that dominate the rural life picture wherever dairying is the major farm enterprise. For instance, there is a high degree of interrelationship between country and city; there are certain work rhythms and group activities that fit in with them; and there is a stable income received at regular intervals throughout the year.

Dairy Farmers at Work

The outstanding characteristics of dairy-farm life are its regular routines of work and its constant attention to detail. The cows are barned, fed, milked, and otherwise cared for regularly, at least twice a day, and usually by the clock. The milk, too, must be properly and quickly handled. It may be cooled and prepared for transportation to bottling plants, as is the case for market-milk dairies within shipping distance of cities, or for delivery to cheese factories; or the milk is run through a cream separator, and the cream is cooled, which is the common practice on butter-dairying farms such as those concentrated in the southern fringes of the Wisconsin and Minnesota dairy sections. Some farmers haul their own milk or cream, while others place it on the roadside regularly to be picked up by a neighbor's or a dealer's truck. Such equipment as milk pails, cans, cream separators, and milking machines must be cleaned twice a day. This is generally done in the dwelling or in the milk house near the barn, and it is often done by the women. These and other routine, twice-a-day chores constitute the major part of the work on numerous dairy farms. Any supplementary farm enterprises must be attended to between the morning and evening work with the cows.

The daily work schedule is most exacting on the farms that produce fluid milk, and it is least rigidly followed on those that produce farm-separated cream. On the latter, the milking still has to be done twice a day, but the time of milking may vary an hour or so now and then without any serious results. There are other important differences on these farms: the milking for farm-separated cream production can be done under less exacting sanitary conditions; yields may be permitted to fluctuate more in harmony with the seasons, so that production need not be kept up during the winter months; the size of the herd is often smaller; the dairy barn and other equipment are often less up-to-date; other farm enterprises are more important; and the farmers are usually in less close contact with market outlets, and thus in less close contact with the townspeople generally. These and other differences in the daily work habits and general way of life among dairy farmers who specialize in different milk products are much less than the differences that exist between dairy farmers as a whole and the farmers in any of the other major type-farming regions.

Wherever commercial dairying of any type is done, there are also weekly, seasonal, and annual rhythms of work closely identified with it, such as the production, use, and storage of feed crops; the breeding of the stock, and the raising or disposing of the calves; the care of the buildings and fields, and handling of supplementary farm enterprises; the purchasing of supplies, and the attending of farmers' meetings, livestock sales, and so on. Dairy farming is not an in-and-out proposition, such as commercial wheat farming or vegetable growing may often be. The dairyman is on the job morning and evening, weekdays, Sundays, and holidays, every day in the week, every month in the year, and from one year to the next. He has to know his business all the time. Moreover, dairy farming responds well to advanced techniques, and the farmer needs to know a great many things, including how to run a milking machine, how to store ensilage, how to get the best results from feeding, and how to pull a sick cow through to good health again.

Children on dairy farms learn early what has to be done. They get initiated by driving the cattle in from the pasture and by doing simple chores about the farm. They help, too, at the lighter jobs during haying and harvesting, and attending to certain animals, which are sometimes given to them as their special responsibility. At twelve or thirteen they frequently operate cultivators or drive the tractor. And by the time he is between sixteen and eighteen, a boy is nearly ready to take a man's place. It is at about this time that the farmer must begin planning to make a place for a son or son-in-law by increasing the size of the farm's business or by relinquishing some of the work and management himself. Otherwise the young people usually leave home, perhaps to take nonfarm employment. Maturing girls also assist with chores on many dairy farms, especially with milking and cleaning the equipment. The women of the old American or Yankee families in New England, and of the old American and Scandinavian families in New York and the western sections, do less work around the dairy barn and in the fields than is done by the women of the Polish and German families. But in all nationality groups, dairying is characteristically a family enterprise. This is because of the regularity with which the work has to be done, and because of the personal attention required in the handling of the herd in order to get the best returns. In most dairy sections herds ordinarily run from ten to forty cows, the size usually being determined by what a farmer and his family, sometimes helped by a hired man or two, can manage successfully. The number of cows can, of course, be increased when up-to-date mechanization is used.

There are giant dairy farms and there are small ones, but these are both exceptions. Huge enterprises, such as those represented by Southern cotton plantations, Western cattle ranches, and industrialized fruit and vegetable farms, are rare in dairying. Some few large "estate" farms do have 150 to 200 cows, and now and then a "milk-factory" dairy farm has even more. These latter establishments are often the prominently displayed projects of milk distributors, and are designed to convey impressions of great cleanliness and modernity. Certified-milk farms, the ultimate in sanitary requirements, are not characteristically family-sized farms. Farms with very small dairy herds are scattered throughout most of the dairy areas; the greatest concentrations are to be found in the marginal dairy sections on the edges of the areas, on lands that are the least well adapted for dairying within the areas, and on farms that specialize in nondairy production.

The typical dairy farm follows a balanced diversification. Nearly all dairy farms have some complementary feed crops, although additional feed, especially concentrates, is often bought in great quantities. This is especially true in the eastern sections of the dairy country, where fields are small and rough and grain yields are low, and around the largest metropolitan areas, where land prices are too high for the cows to be kept on pasture economically. Many dairy farms, especially in the North Central states, not only have extensive pasture, but produce grain for feed, and also have one or more important supplementary enterprises, such as canning, growing potatoes, or raising poultry, hogs, or dairy breeding stock. In the Cumberland-Shenandoah Valley, western New York, western Michigan, and a few localities in Wisconsin, orchards and other specialties are often combined with dairying. Dairy farms tend to be less diversified in New York and New England, with such poultry, forest products, and cash crops as are produced usually being clearly overshadowed by the dairy enterprise. In some parts of the Northeast, specialized farms are mixed in with dairy farms, with the specialty crops generally being located on the most fertile valley lands.

Scientific and mechanized farming, which was taken up early by dairy farmers, continues to increase. Soil fertility is generally maintained by the constant application of animal refuse wherever dairying is carried on as the main enterprise or as supplementary to it. Moreover, tractors, manure spreaders, silos, milking machines, crop rotation, pasture renovation, balanced feeding, and better cattle breeding and selection are increasingly prevalent. The customary ways of doing things often change slowly, but superstition as a determiner of farm practices is perhaps less common in dairying than in most other types of farming. For in order to succeed, the dairy farmer has to be on his toes every day. All of this puts a premium on adaptability as well as on skill and industriousness.

Rural life in the dairy areas is characterized by stability. Dairying is usually a long-time operation, carried out on the same farm. It involves less speculation than most farm enterprises, and requires a longer time to develop. Consequently, dairying seldom attracts those who seek to make a quick fortune. A farmer needs to be established more or less permanently in order to be effective in dairying. Otherwise he has no adequate incentive to develop a herd, adjust the barn to his needs, follow a constructive crop rotation, and return manure to the land. The regularity with which dairy farmers receive milk or cream checks throughout the year encourages constancy and certainty in living patterns.

This stability, along with the other characteristics of dairying, favors ownership of farms by their operators. Thus, in 1945 only one eighth of all the farmers in the 268 counties in the dairy areas were tenants. This farm tenancy rate is lower than that in any major type-farming area except the western specialty-crop areas, where, although the tenancy rate is low, there are great numbers of seasonal farm wage workers. In the dairy areas, with the low tenancy rate and with a smaller proportion of the farms using hired workers than in the western specialty-crop areas, the proportion of all the farm workers who are members of owner-operator families is greater than in any other commercial major type-farming region. In the Northeast, farm tenancy rates in dairy counties range from 5 to 15 per cent, while they are somewhat higher in the Great Lakes states and in the lower parts of the Baltimore-Washington milk shed. Not only are tenancy rates generally low, but the tenantry that does exist is usually of the cash-rent type — a type that approximates farm ownership more closely than any other type of tenancy. The “agricultural ladder” is more real in the dairy areas than in any other major type-farming area. Not infrequently a tenant is the owner’s son or other relative, or a friend, and the owner is planning for him eventually to take over the ownership of the farm.

The rural population of the dairy areas is composed of people of diverse backgrounds. Included are old-line Americans and Germans, Scandinavians, Poles, and other northern Europeans who later settled in, or migrated to, all parts of the northern United States. The old-line Americans or Yankees greatly predominate in New England, although even in this area there are sections composed largely of Poles, French Canadians, Italians, Swiss, or other immigrant groups, most of whom have come in since 1870. The mixed population in the dairying sections of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland includes people of Dutch and German descent, among them the Amish. In the Great Lakes region Scandinavians and Germans form a large part of the dairy-farm population, although there are scattered areas in which the old American culture still persists from the period between 1840 and 1890, when the westward migration from New England and New York took place.

Commercial dairy farming, which is today among the most prosperous of the major types of farming, developed rather late. It represents in fact something of the opposite of the frontier, although it did develop fairly soon after settlement in the newer, most western sections of the dairy country, where some new means of making a living was sorely needed after lumbering and wheat farming went into decline. The development of dairying in Wisconsin and Minnesota was aided by the railroads, which were built relatively early, and which formed direct connections to the growing cities of the Great Lakes states and of the states farther east; dairying was also aided by the soils and the climate — the growing season is too short to produce hard corn successfully — which were admirably adapted to the production of grass, ensilage crops, and soft corn for feed; and by the effective promotion of dairy farming by state leaders and agencies, especially the University of Wisconsin. In the older, eastern sections commercial dairying began early and gradually to supplant general farming, in which both grain and sheep had long been important.

As industry expanded and the urban population increased, more and more dairying developed immediately around the larger cities. Subsequently it developed farther away, too, until much of the farming in the Northeast came to be dominated by dairying. This expansion still goes on. Thus, during the recent prosperous years, as during the depression years before them, there has been a tendency for the dairy areas to expand into more and more of the general farming areas around their borders, and especially into the highlands of central Pennsylvania. Dairy farming is also expanding down into the northern fringes of the corn belt, and as the market for dairy products continues to expand, it is on the increase in numerous localities throughout the nation. In fact, the total milk production rose from 90,699 million pounds in 1925, to 101,205 million pounds in 1935, to 122,219 million pounds in 1945.

The rural-farm level of living in the dairy areas is relatively high, in 1945 being second only to that in the western specialty-crop area. Dwellings and farm buildings are generally of good appearance, particularly in the fluid-milk sections. This is partly because of the long tenure and regular incomes of the farm families, and partly because of the custom, or perhaps the necessity, of keeping things in good repair. The dairy farm must be productive every day, so that the prevention of avoidable losses in production is of paramount importance. The fact that an unusually large amount of living in, and use of, the home naturally goes with dairy farming is also an important factor. Moreover, since the dairyman is held closely to his farm at all times, he makes it comfortable. Thus, the proportion of farms with such modern conveniences as electricity, refrigeration, running water, central heat, and telephone is as high in the dairy areas as anywhere in the country. Nearly three fourths of all the farms in the dairy areas are on improved roads, and most of the rural families are within a few miles of high schools, churches, social organizations, and commercial institutions and services, and nearly always within fifteen or twenty miles of a hospital. In addition, the families on dairy farms usually have a good diet; they have their own milk, of course, and often eggs and meat for their own use, and a family garden is the rule. The result is that low levels of living are found mainly among part-time farmers on small or inefficient farms, and among families who live in isolated or marginal sections around the edges of the main dairy areas.

Groups, Group Relationships, and Organization

Dairy-farm families, especially in localities where fluid milk is sold, are in close touch with neighboring dairy families and also with townspeople. They have regular daily contacts with other people, and maintain numerous organized activities in connection with the production and marketing of dairy products and with the purchasing of supplies. They may not keep up with market reports in the newspapers and on the radio nearly so closely as do the cotton, grain, and livestock farmers, because their dairy products are commonly sold, even before they are produced, at an agreed price that the farmer (or his agent) was a party to determining. Dairy farmers who sell fluid milk are especially aware of the close relationship that exists between themselves and townspeople. First of all, they must ever be mindful of the sanitation standards and other public policies related to dairying, many of which arise in city councils and state legislatures. Then there is the obvious relationship between urban employment conditions and the market for milk. These and other rural-urban relationships in the dairy country tend to prevent the fluid-milk dairy farmers from being socially isolated and from localizing their attitudes. These things are true, but often to a less marked degree, of the farm-separated-cream dairy farmers, who usually live, as was noted earlier in this chapter, in the less populous portions of the areas, who tend to have smaller herds and less dairying equipment, and who are not in such close touch with the townspeople as are the producers for the fluid-milk market.

Making a living by dairying — whether fluid-milk or cream — influences in varying degrees the customs and programs of local organizations and community life. Throughout the dairy country, for instance, meetings and events to be attended by farm people are necessarily held during the middle of the day or late evening in order to interfere least with the regular morning and evening chores. It is also common for local banks, merchants, and supply dealers to adjust business hours to fit in with the dairy farmer's daily work schedule, and for seasonal and annual group activities to be scheduled at times when the farm work is lightest.

Dairy cattle and related activities dominate county fairs, 4-H Club projects, vocational agricultural work, and Extension programs in most parts of the dairy areas. And dairy farming, and all that goes with it, occupies an important place in the discussions and programs of farm organizations, civic organizations, and other groups. The prices of milk and cream and of feed are nearly always of real concern, and often dominate the conversations of farm people wherever they are together, whether it be in the trading-center towns, after church, or elsewhere.

When the producers think sale prices are too low and may remain too low, real pressure is brought through their sales representatives to raise them. And if this fails, there may be threats of stopping deliveries. Now and then strikes and blockades have occurred, and milk has sometimes been dumped by the roadside. Moreover, dairymen maintain educational and legislative programs calculated to protect their own interests. Many states in which dairying is prominent have statutes that promote the distribution and use of dairy products, while the organized dairy industry as a whole has long carried on a determined effort to limit the use of oleomargarine and other substitutes for dairy products.

Of the institutions, groups, and other associations common to dairy areas, the most important are the special-interest groups that revolve around the farmers as dairymen. These include the co-operative dairy manufacturing plants and milk-marketing associations, the dairy herd improvement associations, the purebred cattle associations, the artificial breeding associations, the agricultural fair societies, and the pasture and feed-crop groups. To varying extents, depending mainly on the kind of dairying in a given locality, nearly all these organizations are found throughout the dairy areas. And many of the local Farm Bureau organizations and Granges, and a few of the Farmers Union Clubs, express interest in the local problems of dairying. As a matter of fact, many of the Granges that are most active today are in the dairy country, for local Granges seem to thrive under the community conditions and co-operative interests that accompany dairying.

The agricultural co-operative movement in America, which started early, has been developed most soundly in the dairy areas. Cheese rings began in New York state about a century ago. In many of the dairy communities in the North Central states practically all the milk or cream produced has from the outset been processed by local co-operative cheese factories, creameries, or large-scale plants that process a diversity of dairy products. In these western parts of the dairy areas, where co-operative enterprises are rather generally federated into state or regional sales organizations, many of the Scandinavian dairy groups had had successful experiences with co-operatives in Europe before migrating to America. In the eastern market-milk areas a large proportion of the dairy farmers belong to milk-shed or regional co-operatives. Some of these act as sales intermediaries or bargaining agents between farmers and milk distributors, while others process and distribute milk all the way from producer to consumer. Many dairymen also buy farm supplies co-operatively, especially feed, seed, and fertilizer.

Another type of group activity that is common throughout the dairy country is the participation of farmers in the programs of such public agencies as the Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Conservation program, co-operative credit agencies, and milk control boards. Most of these relationships are of a business or educational nature, and bring the farmer into contact with professional people and administrators, usually at county-seat towns or larger urban centers, and also by mail. The educational activities of the Extension Service are widespread in the dairy country, and are generally participated in by farmers, homemakers, and by young people through their 4-H Clubs, and especially by those in the upper half of the economic scale. As their operations become more scientific, dairy farmers are increasingly looking to the agricultural colleges, Extension Service, farm journals, and other agencies for advice.

Next in importance to farmer's organizations and agricultural agencies are such miscellaneous special-interest groups as parent-teacher associations, young people's organizations, women's clubs and societies of various kinds, civic organizations, fraternal orders, and veteran's groups. These groups are active in the dairy country, not so much because of dairying itself, as because the people live close together and are accustomed as dairy farmers to doing things through organizations rather than in the informal manner practiced in some of the other major type-farming areas, particularly the cotton belt and the general and self-sufficing areas, where there is little organized activity among the farmers in connection with their work. It is also significant that these miscellaneous special-interest activities of the dairy country center in the local or near-by villages and towns where farmers market their dairy products and do their trading. It is true that social differences between rural families, such as those emanating from differences in religion, income, and nationality, have more influence on the participation of people in these groups than on their participation in farm organizations. Altogether, these miscellaneous special-interest groups reach perhaps more than three fourths of the farm families in the dairy country. Most of those who do not take part are from the rural-nonfarm population, whose interests center in the towns where they work rather than in the open country where they live.

The daily work requirements on dairy farms generally limit the off-farm contacts of farm families to relatively near-by places, for the adult members of dairy families cannot be away from home more than a few hours at most, unless a hired man or neighbor can be secured to look after the chores. The trips of dairy farmers to the nearest processing plants, receiving stations, warehouse, or store are frequent, and help to account for the survival and activity of the towns and villages that dot the dairy country. Trips to county seats and larger cities are ordinarily not made more than once a week, and are usually to places within twenty-five miles or less. On such trips shopping, visiting, and movies or other recreation are often combined with farm business.

The relationships of rural people in the dairy country to local governments are very real, for real-estate taxes, licenses, court procedures, and so forth are important. But most important of all to the majority of the farmers are the activities in connection with the maintenance of roads. It is particulary important that roads be kept open in the winter so that the milk or cream haulers and the school buses can go through on time, and so that farm families can make their regular trips to town. During the horse-and-buggy days, opening the roads after a snowstorm was a big job, and neighbors frequently worked together to shovel out drifts and break the first track. Today, however, modern tractor snowplows do this task, and if a farmer finds that he cannot get to town with an automobile the day after a storm, he usually feels that something is wrong, and turns to the local official who is responsible.

The organization and functions of local government vary across the dairy areas, but these variations are due more to the differences in cultural backgrounds and historical developments of the various sections than to dairy farming itself. Ever since the region was settled over two hundred years ago, local government in New England has been on a township basis and has operated through town meetings. Its concerns are the local roads, schools, libraries, public welfare, tax collection, and other governmental functions. The result has been that the township is strongly unified as a community group, for numerous local organizations and institutions also operate more or less on the basis of the township. Thus, in New England the sentimental feeling of belonging to the county is very weak. The township idea and its patterns were carried westward during the later settlement of the Northern states; and it partially persists today in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Chesapeake Bay area. In the dairy areas west of New York, however, the county has always been the main basis of local government, and the people often have strong feelings of attachment to their counties. Even here expressions of the New England township patterns are seen in town halls, in the election of township officers who have minor functions, in the forum discussion idea, and in other customs. In fact, New England is in one sense the spiritual parent of the entire dairy areas, for dairy farming practically everywhere in the United States, whether done by New Englanders, Scandinavians, Germans, Swedes, or people of other backgrounds, is characterized by the regular work habits and the frugality for which New England had become known long before dairying supplanted sheep raising and grain farming in most of what is now the northeastern part of the dairy country.

The economic and social solidity of dairying stabilizes rural schools and churches, and rural ministers and school heads often occupy places of leadership. Churches and schools are important local groupings through which representatives of nonlocal agencies often reach the rural people. In New England, where they operate on the township basis as a function of township government, the schools are in the local villages, although in the more thinly populated townships the young people are usually sent to high school in some larger village or town. Elsewhere in the dairy areas consolidated school districts are the general rule, and there is a high school in nearly every trading center, with courses in vocational agriculture frequently being offered. The three-month summer vacation enables the young people to work on farms during the busy season that lasts from the time the corn is planted until the silo is filled. High-school basketball games, graduation exercises, and plays and operettas are attended by many farm people. These school activities offer a bit of recreation and release from the steady cares of farming, and as often as not, the stars of such events are farm boys and girls who hurry through their evening chores to get back to the schoolhouse in time.

Churches in the dairy country are often centers of much social and religious activity. They occupy an especially important place in the life of the nationality groups who have arrived in this country more recently. Thus, Lutheran and Catholic churches stand out in the Great Lakes communities where many people of a particular background – German, Polish, Scandinavian, Finnish, or Bohemian – still live together in closely knit settlements. Amish and Mennonite religious groups occupy a similarly important place among the Pennsylvania Dutch or plain people in the Philadelphia-Baltimore milk shed. While Methodist and Baptist churches are common in most of the dairying areas, it is the Congregational and Presbyterian churches that are most prominent in the majority of the New England and New York, and Pennsylvania and Ohio sections, where old-line Americans still predominate. Some Congregational and Presbyterian churches are also found in the western areas, where they were established by the migrants who moved across the Northern states from New England and New York. Indeed, the path of this migration can be traced by the trail of plain white churches with the front vestibules and tall spires that are typical of New England church architecture.

Many rural churches are small in membership, partly because dairying makes for small communities, and sometimes in the more marginal dairy sections because the farm population has declined. But regardless of size and denomination, most of the village churches in the dairy areas are active. Regular worship and Sunday-school services are of most importance, and in addition there are numerous social activities and community events, such as public dinners or suppers, church fairs or bazaars, Christmas programs, welfare projects, picnics, and the regular meetings of the women's societies and youth organizations. Weddings and funerals are especially important among certain nationality groups, and among some of these the most active churches are located in the open country and are the outstanding centers of community life.

Rural people in the dairy country associate in such locality groupings as neighborhoods and community trade-area centers. These include the families living in villages, as well as those in the surrounding open country, who trade, market, get a haircut, visit on street corners, and obtain other farm and home services at the same place. The very nature of dairying makes these commercial-informal associations frequent; out of them grow deep attachments to home towns and local friends. West of New York the villages and trade-service communities are larger and more complete. In New England most of the organizations and institutions center in the small village or hamlet of the local township, with the main shopping and commercial contacts being made on a more or less weekly basis in the nearest large town or city.

Family visiting is common everywhere in the dairy country, but it is no longer confined to the immediate neighborhood. Rather, it covers relatives, friends, or families who are associated by religion or some other ties, and who live within motoring distance. Social cleavages are most marked in New England, where they generally separate the old-line Americans from the families who have moved into this section in recent decades from central and southern Europe and from near-by Canada. In most communities everyone knows everyone else by his first name, and chance visiting on the streets of local villages, in bars and taverns, in supply stores, at community events, before and after church, and at the milk station, creamery, or cheese factory is important, especially in the western or Great Lakes region. For those dairy families who take little part in organizations, these town visits constitute their main social contacts.

Attitudes and Values of the People

There are certain attitudes and values that are generally associated with good dairy farming everywhere. Dairy farmers have strong feelings about the importance of steadiness and know-how in dairying. They take pride in the performance of herds and in the adequacy and appearance of farmsteads. They believe in stability of residence and home ownership, and in relying on co-operative methods to help attain better incomes. They are favorably inclined toward education for its practical value, maintain a general social philosophy of religion, put high values on local control, and have strong attachments to their local communities.

It is not surprising that dairy-farm people generally have a high regard for the steadiness, the regularity of performance, and the know-how that it takes to succeed. Dairying is not the kind of farming in which one tries to make a "killing" in a year or two, but is, rather, the kind one stays in throughout a lifetime. Thus, a farmer is looked down upon in the community if he is careless, if he is late in getting his cans on the milkstand, if he is irregular in arriving for work in the field in the morning, or if he hangs around town in the afternoon so long that he is not on time with his chores.

Farmers often judge hired men by the same criteria. Above all else they expect them to be on the job at all times. They also expect them to know cows and to be kind to them, to take care of the machinery, and to treat other details with consideration. Although dairy farmers value their own competence above that of any hired worker, they attach great importance to skill and to the long-time employment of any wage workers who are used in milk production. That skill is so highly valued stems from a realization that an occasional mistake in the care or management of the herd can have damaging effects that are far-reaching.

As we have said, dairy farmers take pride in the performance of their herds. In the heart of highly commercial areas this pride is encouraged by the dairy herd improvement associations and the purebred cattle associations, which usually publish monthly production records of the farmer-members, naming the high herd and the high cow. Often the interest and pride that farm families have in their dairy animals border on affection. Indeed, most cows are given pet names. This attitude is not without reason, for cows perform best under gentle care. Thus, to the dairyman the slogan "Milk from Contented Cows" has most meaning in terms of quantity of production.

Most dairy farmers, taking pride as they do in the physical resources and in the general appearance of their farms, love shaded farmsteads, substantial dwellings in good repair, large well-kept barns, concrete or tile silos, tidy pastures and fields, and good fences. These, along with a good herd, are symbols of success in any dairy section. But the greatest emphasis is placed upon them in the intensive commercial sections of the market-milk areas, where sanitation regulations are highest. Pride in herd and farmstead seems to be generally more noticeable among the Germans and Scandinavians than among other dairy families.

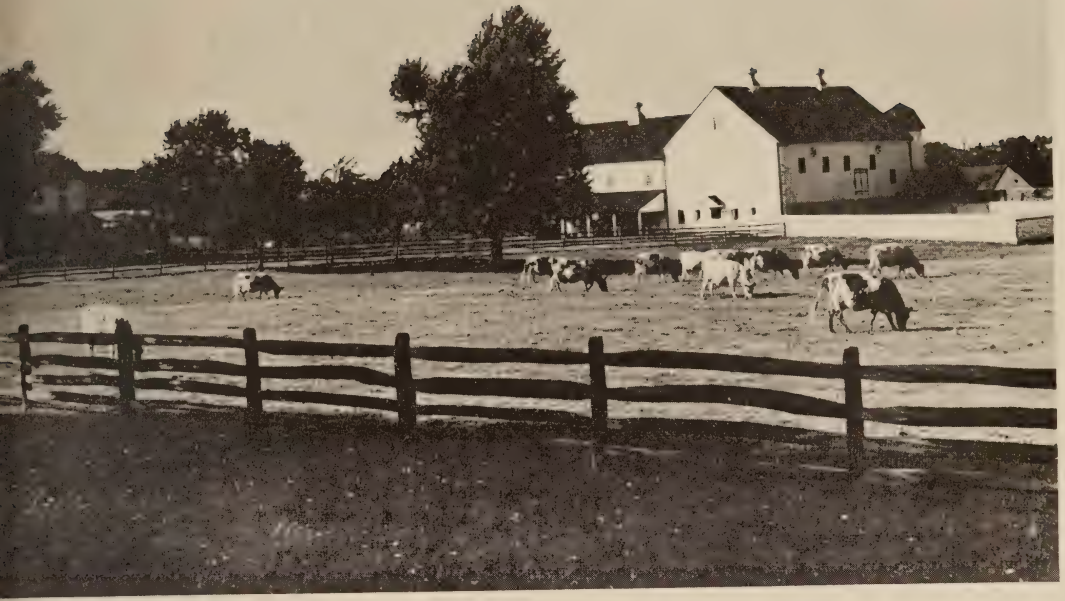
Dairy farmers place a high value on financial solvency and on family security and stability. They have never-ending expenditures, but they secure their income at regular intervals throughout the year and try to keep their bills paid. They do not like to be deeply in debt, and naturally expect to pay off any big debts or mortgages they do have in monthly installments rather than in annual lump-sum payments. A dependable monthly income gives the dairy family a sense of security that is not possible in the more speculative farm enterprises characterized by high fluctuations in yields and prices. The very fact that dairy farming is not a risky proposition, as cotton, wheat, or potato farming is, tends to impart an especially high regard for family solvency and security.

Closely related to the dairy farmer's high regard for security and solvency is his desire for farm ownership and permanency of residence. It is a common saying in the dairy country that floaters cannot succeed at dairy farming. The desire for ownership and permanency also fits in with the wish held by many a dairy farmer that a son or son-in-law will take over the place. This is especially noticeable among the German and Scandinavian families in the most successful dairying areas of the Great Lakes, among the closely knit, religion-centered communities such as the Mennonites, and in some localities among the Catholics.

All through the dairy country a high value is placed on co-operation among dairy farmers, but it is most marked in the sections where co-operatives are localized, as in the butter-cheese sections of Wisconsin and Minnesota. The dairy farmer's belief in co-operation springs from the market situation in which he finds himself, for since dairy products are highly perishable the farmer has often been at the mercy of the dealer. Certainly there is no time for bargaining after the milk is produced. There must, therefore, be a prearranged market. As a result, dairy farmers have combined to act as their own dealers through co-operative cheese rings, and later through co-operative creameries, co-operative milk-bargaining associations, and dairy plants that handle market milk for cities. The dairy farmer looks upon the co-operatives as a means of assuring himself of a market at a good price for his products, and as a means of assuring home ownership, a high level of living with an abundance of good food, and the essential home conveniences and mechanical aids that are required for efficiency and sanitation on dairy farms.

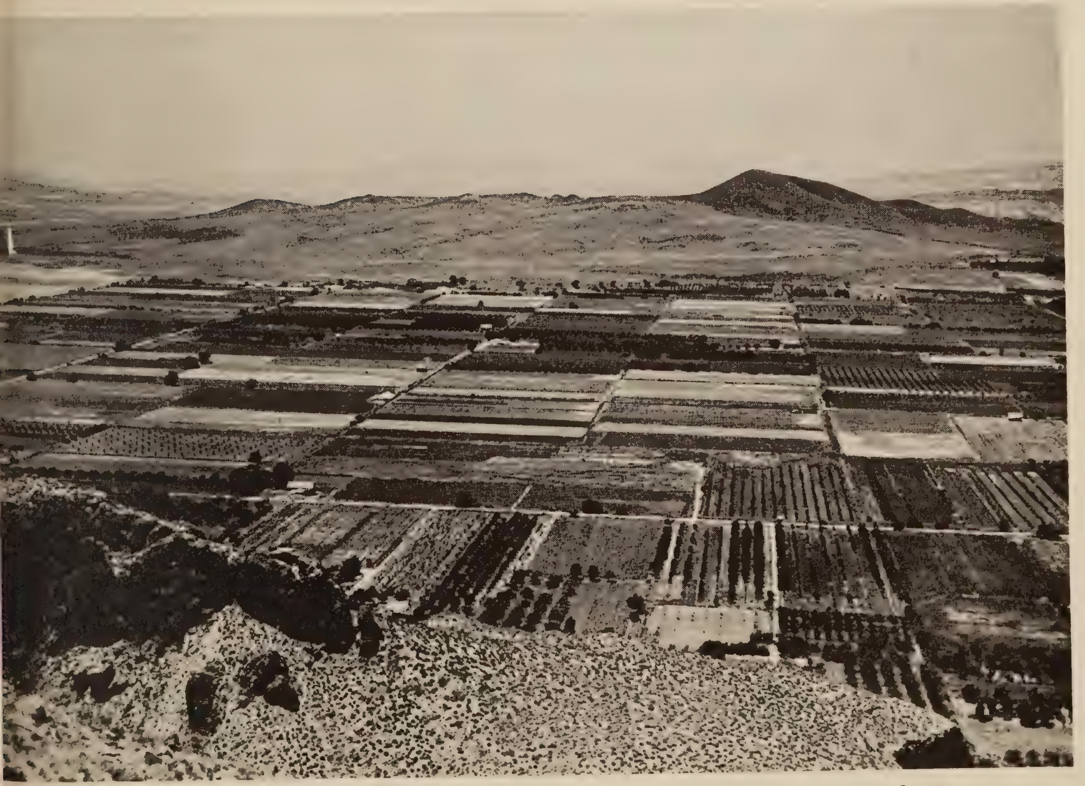
The dependence of dairy farmers upon technology and science, along with their close relationships with urban communities, causes them to put a high practical value on education. High-school graduation is coming to be the accepted minimum, while vocational training for agriculture and home economics are widely favored since they contribute directly toward equipping youth to succeed in dairying under present conditions.

The security and the stability of dairy farming are also reflected in the religious beliefs of the people. In the dairy areas religious expressions are generally more rational and often more liberal, and have more social emphasis than they have in most other type-farming regions. Dairy farmers seldom have the jitters. Their farm operations are not speculative, and each member



30. Dairy farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Wolcott]



31. Type of farming and topography around Hurricane, Utah

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Forsythe]

32. Utah rancher stops irrigating his potato field to talk with F.S.A. Supervisor

[Courtesy U.S.D.A.; photograph by Forsythe]

33. Landscape in Union County, Tennessee

[Courtesy U.S.D.A., photograph by Forsythe] of the family makes his daily work contribution toward a stable income. They meet the danger of depletion of their fields by regularly putting back into them great quantities of barnyard manure. Living with balanced relationships between family and labor, rural and urban contacts and influences, and soil use and maintenance, and depending upon the co-operation of their neighbors, dairy farmers have relatively few conflicts over religious doctrines. As a result, in the dairy areas "gospel" sects are at a minimum.

The high value that dairy farmers place on local control permeates much of their thoughts and actions with respect to community, state, and national matters. They have seen, often with serious misgivings, the rise of certain city and state regulatory powers over sanitation which affect dairy-farm management and practices. They have also seen, with further misgivings, the rise of labor unions in central markets and in industries related to farming, the increasing influence of pressure groups, the local bank becoming an impersonal branch of some city bank, the encroachment of the state and federal governments upon the various functions of township and county government, and the loss of local neighborhood schools through consolidation. Although by no means opposed to all these changes, dairy farmers are quick to recognize overlapping inefficiency and conflict between agencies. Many of these changes have aroused resistance, for they have been regarded as a challenge to beliefs in localism, the township idea, independence, solvency, self-support, and familism. All of these values are strong elements, not only of dairy farming, but also of the cultural heritage that stretches across the Northeastern states. Dairy farmers want to do things in their own way on their farms, in their churches, in their schools, in their co-operatives, and in their township or county local governments. Moreover, the close contacts with the local trading centers have produced strong community loyalties that stabilize these towns and further strengthen the ideals that center in local control and the preservation of local institutions.

As for the literary and artistic expression of the rural dairy areas, they have nondairying backgrounds, which include the Puritanism of New England, the commercialism and cosmopolitanism of New York and Pennsylvania, and the Western political liberalism of Wisconsin and Minnesota. And since the dairy country contains most of the largest cities of the nation, it also contains the leading publishing companies, the big art galleries, and the most famous symphonies. But upon considering the great volume and variety of books and other literature and art coming out of the cities in the dairy areas, one rightly gets the impression that most of the people are scarcely aware that dairying exists, or that there is any reason why dairying or any other matter so continuously commonplace as the production and distribution of human food should warrant artistic treatment. In this connection, however, it is important to remember that but a tenth of the people in the dairy areas live by farming, that the dairy industry developed rather late, and that dairy farming has never had the over-all influence upon the total life of the region that cotton has had in the lower South, that corn-hog farming has had in the Middle West, that wheat has had in the high Plains, or that cattle and sheep have had in the Far West.

Still, there are art and literature that have sprung up directly around dairying. Certainly cows have long been a familiar part of farmyard and rural landscape paintings, while the farm woman has appeared on formal canvas as a dairy maid perhaps more often than in any other single role. Yet much of this art has a distinct tang of English yesteryears. Present-day commercial dairying, as commonly seen by those within and without it, is a highly realistic business proposition rather than a picturesque way of life. Dairy people themselves are most interested in the literature that helps them do a better job, so that the writings and findings of public and private research agencies on dairying are probably more widely used than the research on any other type-of-farming enterprise.

Some writings on general subjects, however, have effectively portrayed rural life in one part or another of the dairy country. There is Gladys Hasty Carroll's *As the Earth Turns,* which shows the daily round of work on a small New England dairy farm, and the relationships of the established old-line American family with a newcomer French-Canadian family. There is Greene's *Not in Our Stars,* which is a realistic account of the expansion of a dairy farm in the New York milk shed as it is related to mechanization, big business, milk routes, and the near-by village. Some of the works of Dorothy Canfield Fisher and of Robert Frost also have a real feeling for the small Eastern dairy farm, and give attention to people and hay fields and fenced pastures, while Ellen Glasgow's *Barren Ground* shows how a few dairy cows helped to restore a run-down Virginia farm. Rural life in the central parts of the dairy country are set forth in such books as Frederick's *Green Bush,* which emphasizes the positive side of farm life, and Eaton's *Backfurrow,* which is critical of rural manners and attitudes. From dairy-dominated Wisconsin and Minnesota have come Hamlin Garland's *A Son of the Middle Border,* Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street,* Ole Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth,* and the well-known writings of economists, sociologists, and politicians like Veblen, Commons, Ross, and La Follette. Through much of the writing from these western parts of the dairy country there runs a streak of liberalism. Most of the writings from areas identified with dairying clearly value regular work habits, high and plain living, and co-operative effort—all of which are characteristics of the way of life associated with successful dairying.

Major Trends in the Dairy Areas

One of the most prominent long-time changes in the dairy-farming picture of the United States has been the spread of dairying to new areas. Commercial dairying began on a small scale in New England when the village needs for milk and butter grew too large to be met by family cows maintained on the commons pasture, and when distributors began to operate between the consumer and the farmer who had been both producer and peddler. It spread with the growth of Eastern cities and with improved transportation, and also with the opening, by migration and by technology, of the new Western production areas. And when rapid transportation and refrigerated shipping became available, butter and cheese dairying began to shift from the older, Eastern dairy country to Wisconsin and Minnesota, which had favorable physical resources. The rise of local co-operatives and the more dependable sales outlets arranged by them encouraged the further expansion of dairying. The expansion of dairying and the dairy areas in recent years in response to better transportation and the greater market demands for dairy products has been especially noticeable in the general farming areas adjacent to the dairy areas, in New England and central Pennsylvania, in the upper edges of the corn belt, and in smaller areas here and there throughout the nation, especially those near the large cities.

The early development of butter and cheese dairying in Wisconsin and Minnesota, the later expansion of farm-separated cream areas, and, finally, the widening of fluid-milk sheds through improved transportation facilities have in recent decades led to the decline of dairying in some of the marginal areas of the New England hill country and elsewhere. Further advances in transportation and marketing may lead to the production of market milk and sweet cream at still greater distances from the consuming centers, even though trade barriers and institutional arrangements hamper these changes. Such a trend might alter farming in the present milk sheds, especially on the least efficient farms and in areas where most of the feed for the cows has to be purchased from a distant place.

In the dairy areas as a whole, the total population continues to increase, but for well over fifty years the farm population has been declining as marginal farms have been abandoned and the remaining farming units have been enlarged. In some areas, particularly in the older, rougher sections of the eastern parts of the dairy country, there has been considerable decrease in the upland acreage in croplands and pastures, which are operated largely by Yankees. At the same time, an increasing proportion of the better bottom lands are being used by relatively recent immigrant families — largely Poles, Bohemians, and Italians — who specialize in tobacco, onions, and other farm crops rather than in dairying.

The noticeable trend toward increasing urbanization has affected rural life all across the dairy areas. As the city population has grown larger and dairying has increased, especially in the sale of fluid milk, the farm people have been brought into closer and closer contact with urban centers. While the trend toward greater urbanization has been nation-wide, it has had distinctive implications and effects in the dairy country. First of all, nearby market places have become increasingly important. The fact that local creameries and cheese factories belong to the farmers themselves has helped to keep these villages alive as trading and social centers in the face of the widening reach of county-seat towns and cities. Some people are wondering how long the smaller villages will survive, particularly now that co-operative leaders are finding it increasingly efficient to develop larger units of operation. A second form of urbanization, most noticeable in the Northeastern dairy sections, is manifested in the continued growth of part-time farming and rural residences within commuting distance of urban or other nonfarm employment. Large suburban (or rurban) areas in which there is a mixture of both farm and nonfarm families have developed around many of the larger cities. This trend is of importance to dairying because it is affecting the farm labor supply and farm wage rates, land values, milk distribution, and the unity of the community. A third form of urbanization consists in the recreational development whereby rural areas are being chosen for the summer homes of urban people, the permanent homes of retired and semiretired city people who have business and professions within 100 to 150 miles, and for the homes of artists and writers and of others who prefer to live in the open country. This development, although oldest and most noticeable in the hilly dairy sections of western New England, upper New York state, and eastern Pennsylvania, is also occurring on a considerable scale around Chicago and the other larger cities throughout the dairy country. In some sections the recreational and other nonfarm uses of land are raising its value far above what it is worth for farming, so that it is difficult for young couples to get started in farming. This influx of urban people, many of whom are wealthier and better educated than the resident farm families, is affecting local leadership, local organizations and institutions, market outlets for dairy and other farm products, and other aspects of farm and community life.

The expansion of scientific farming during recent decades is another major trend that has significantly affected rural life in the dairy areas. Among the more important features have been the improvement of pasture and hay lands and the development of new forage crops, more efficient feeding, disease control, better treatment of milk and cream, artificial insemination, and mechanical innovations such as the milking machine and the silage harvester. Along with the expanding use of science and technology have come a greater reliance upon education and dairy research and a greater interest in what is going on in the world generally. Technological changes in dairying have been gradual rather than sudden or cataclysmic, and no known startling developments are now in the offing. Dairy farmers maintain a constant premium on know-how and efficiency. This in turn largely accounts for their widespread participation in farm-organization activities, special-interest groups, and co-operatives, as well as for their interest in practical education.

Another outstanding trend has been the tendency for large-scale co-operatives to become centralized selling agencies that take an increasing interest in all public activities and affairs concerning dairy farm families. Most of the larger dairy co-operatives are, in fact, federated in the National Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation. Some dairy co-operatives are federated with other types of co-operatives in the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the American Institute of Cooperation, and the state co-operative councils, which are federations or overhead agencies designed to promote research and educational and public activities. This trend toward large-scale co-operative organization has been most noticeable in the North Central dairy areas, but it includes some of the large market-milk co-operatives of the Northeast which participate in industry-wide and general co-operative agencies.

The attitudes of farm people in the dairy areas have also undergone change, especially concerning land, technology, and local control. Farmers are now less sentimentally attached to the home, the community, and the traditional methods of farming than their parents were. They regard farming more as a source of income, and land more as an economic commodity. Farm families are under greater pressure to achieve a higher level of material living, so that there is a greater degree of rationaliziation about farming. Most farmers change their practices when they are sure they will thereby increase their income. But as science increases, production and marketing practices are less and less bound by custom. Moreover, since local control continues to be highly valued, dairy farmers are turning more and more to the agricultural colleges and to the Extension Service for expert assistance; and they are finding it increasingly desirable to enlarge their own dairy co-operatives and other organizations in order to safeguard their own prized security more effectively. In any event, dairy farmers, who have long had a say in the marketing of their milk products, are likely to be more insistent than most other farmers upon having things explained. They want to understand the whys and wherefores of a proposed program or suggested changes, and they are satisfied only when they see sense in the propositions in the light of their own background and farming situations.

There is at present no big question or overwhelming trend with implications stalking rural life in the dairy country. The existing problems and issues vary, but the determined efforts to restrict the use of oleomargarine and other substitute dairy products are being maintained. The basic patterns of dairy farming are still much the same: the farmers continue to be aware of their need to work together; life off the farm remains centered in the near-by towns; living standards are high; and local community life is active. There is every indication that the family-farm idea will remain dominant, and that the land on dairy farms will continue to be highly productive. Meanwhile, as we have said, dairy farming is regularly expanding as the urban population gets larger and as the consumption of milk and other dairy products increases. In short, the major rural trends in the dairy country, the widespread group activities, and the controlling values of the people go hand in hand with the characteristics and requirements of dairy farming itself, the keystone of which is stability.

CHAPTER 25

THE WESTERN SPECIALTY-CROP AREAS

BY WALTER C. McKAIN, Jr.

Western Specialty-Crop Country

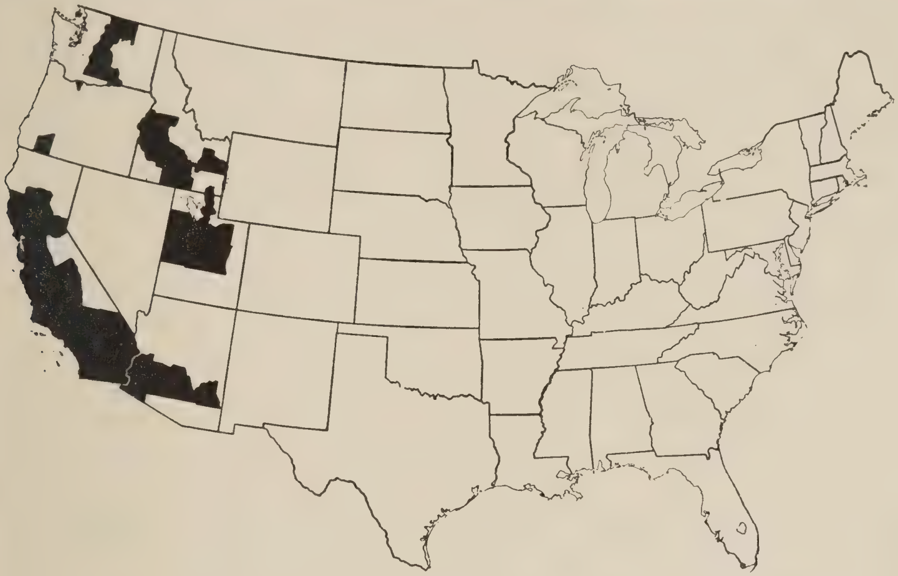
LESS than a hundred years ago the eighty-eight counties comprising the Western specialty-crop area were semiarid range and desert waste land. Today they stand as a tribute to the resourcefulness, perseverance, and ambition of the American farmer. Their eight million acres of irrigated crop land produce the major portion of the nation's almonds, apricots, alfalfa, asparagus, carrots, cantaloupes, cherries, lettuce, prunes, walnuts, lemons, and grapes.

This splendid achievement has hinged upon human control of water, the lifeblood of the specialty-crop area. Wells were dug, rivers tapped, reservoirs established, and gradually large sections of irrigated crop land suitable for intensive cultivation were carved out of the range-livestock region. The project is far from completed, but additional irrigation developments continue every year in each of the states – Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Utah – represented in the Western specialty-crop area.[1]

Within this area wide variations in soil, climate, and the availability of water and marketing outlets have given rise to equally wide diversification of crops. In fact, no other farm area has so many different farm enterprises. One California county by itself shows the commercial production of oranges, cherries, figs, peaches, apricots, pears, prunes, grapes, livestock and dairy products, poultry, olives, berries, almonds, walnuts and filberts, tomatoes, squash, pumpkins, potatoes, melons, hay, wheat, oats, barley, flax, sugar beets, and rice. Other counties produce the additional crops of cotton, hops, dates, melons, lemons, grapefruit, lettuce, celery, asparagus, spinach, artichokes, and avocados, as well as the more unusual items of mushrooms, loquats, and canary seed. One Western rancher succinctly summarized this situation, "We can raise everything here but coffee and boll weevils."

[1] See map (Fig. 46).

Despite the diversification of agricultural production in the Western specialty-crop area, there is a great amount of produce specialization, with most operators handling but one or two crops. Moreover, in an area where almost all types of food can be produced, farm families buy most of their food, and there is less home consumption of food they grow themselves than in any other major agricultural region. This specialization has become so important to the lives of these Western farm people that the very term Western specialty-crop area is derived from this one characteristic.



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 46 WESTERN SPECIALTY–CROP AREAS

It is not strange that such a divergent group of people, who represent all sections of the United States and many foreign countries, has poured into this varied farming territory. In this area have settled successive waves of Easterners, Midwesterners, Southerners, dairy farmers, corn belt farmers, cotton farmers, people from the plains, as well as Germans, Italians, Portuguese, Irish, Scandinavians, Hindustani, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Mexicans, and South Americans. Some came because of religious persecution or political pressure; some found their stimulus in the economic opportunities; others were driven westward by drought and economic failure or were attracted by the increasing demand for farm laborers.

Each of the groups that has migrated into the area has made its contribution to the prevailing culture, but Western specialty-crop society is more than the sum of the cultural patterns that the migrants brought with them from all parts of the world. For the combination of these various value systems and methods of doing things has resulted in a new and different culture pattern. The unique physical environment of the area has also contributed much to the basic culture.

Farming in the Western specialty-crop area is big business. Commercialization and mechanization have followed specialization, and the scale of operation and managerial capacity have supplanted the traditional values of hard work and industry. Throughout the area there is optimism and a justifiable pride in the accomplishments of men and science. Although outsiders may at first be amused by the superlatives specialty-crop farmers use, they, too, soon find them necessary when speaking of the area.

In no other region, excepting perhaps the more populous sections of the dairy areas, has the process of urbanization been carried so far. Only one eighth of the population is classified as rural-farm, while nearly two thirds live in cities or towns. Farm operators and farm laborers not only live for the most part in urban areas; they have also acquired urban spending habits, recreation customs, and attitudes. Social participation follows the contractual, formal pattern of the urban special-interest group.

Among these farm people there are wide variations in the levels of living. Although farm incomes are higher than in any other area, the distribution of income is so uneven that conditions of extreme wealth and extreme poverty exist side by side. Social distance is great between segments of Western specialty-crop society, with the main cleavage occurring between farm operators and hired laborers. It is both difficult and rare for farm laborers to achieve the fact and status of ownership. No distinction exists, however, between the social status of tenant operators and that of owner operators. Farm tenants are often as prosperous, as well educated, and as progressive as farm owners. Although progressive farm operators eagerly accept technological and scientific changes, and have made rapid progress in mechanization, farm management, and distribution methods, they often oppose social change as a threat to industrialized agriculture.

There are broad variations in social organization, values, and attitudes in the different sections of the Western specialty-crop area. The foregoing discussion has described the dominant cultural pattern in irrigated areas of California and southern Arizona. In Utah and Idaho, however, the Mormon Church has been a restraining factor in the specialization and industrialization of agriculture. Farming still persists as a way of life in these areas, and the Mormon Church strongly endorses frugality, piety, neighborliness, and family solidarity. Yet, even in these sections, specialization, the use of hired workers and other features characteristic of agricultural big business are gaining a foothold.

Farming and Farmers in the Western Specialty-Crop Area

A traveler visiting the Western specialty-crop area for the first time is often impressed by the sheer beauty of the agriculture. Orchards are cleanly cultivated, the trees of even height, with painted trunks and newly sprayed branches. Many acres of lettuce, tomatoes, or carrots planted in long straight rows, and vineyards which stretch as far as the eye can see indicate prosperous, efficient farms. To an observer this regularity and perfection might suggest the splendor of "seed catalogue agriculture."

Specialty-crop farming, whether the production of winter vegetables in the Imperial Valley, citrus fruit near Los Angeles, raisin grapes in the southern San Joaquin Valley, sugar beets in Idaho, or apples in the Yakima Valley, has three interrelated major characteristics: first, dependence upon irrigation; second, intensive use of land; and third, speculation. These characteristics significantly affect the character of life in the area.

Reliance upon irrigation rids specialty-crop farming of many weather hazards usually associated with agriculture. Growers may estimate the delivery date in Eastern markets for carrots, melons, or lettuce even before the seeds are planted. A regular flow of water, however, involves considerable dependence upon other farmers. The simplest ditchbank irrigation system requires that each farmer respect the water rights of other users, and irrigation co-operatives usually require joint participation in constructing and maintaining dams, canals, and ditches. Even in the large irrigation projects undertaken by state or Federal governments, farmers must co-operate with respect to the amount of water used and the timing of its consumption.

The settlement patterns of the Western specialty-crop area have to a large extent been determined by irrigation. Even though amazing engineering feats have been performed, it has only proved possible to irrigate about 6 per cent of the land area, since the topography and soil conditions of the land demand that most be used for range, dry-land farming, or nonagricultural purposes. As a result many counties have small sections of irrigated farm land, surrounded by extensive areas of sparsely populated nonfarming regions.

Irrigation is an expensive process. Before water can be applied to the land efficiently, the ground must be cleared and leveled. These high "ripening" costs, added to the cost of the water itself, make intensive farming necessary in order that the farmers may realize a return on their investment. The intensive use of land in the Western specialty-crop area is a definite product of irrigation development. The livestock and wheat ranches that preceded the specialty-crop farms usually had small patches of irrigated land because isolation and transportation difficulties necessitated home production. Many early settlers who had come from general farming areas at first tried to perpetuate a self-sufficient economy. With the increasing accessibility of water, however, general farming has gradually yielded to specialization and intensive use.

Farmers have learned through experimentation which crops are best adapted to local soils and climate. Growers accordingly specialize in asparagus, tomatoes, cotton, olives, or citrus fruits. There are even specialties within a given crop. A grower of grapes may well find it profitable to devote all his time to the cultivation of Tokay, Emperor, or perhaps raisin grapes. Operators have become experts in one or two crops, and when crop-rotation practices require a shift – from a vegetable to alfalfa, for instance – the farmer leases new land and moves there to continue growing his particular specialty.

The intensive use of land and extreme specialization have resulted in urgent seasonal labor needs and the employment of many seasonal laborers.

In no other farming area has the dependence upon hired workers been more marked. Specialized and intensive farming consequently give emphasis to the operator's managerial skill, and at the same time make him dependent upon hired seasonal workers.

Since specialization is often perpetuated by capital investments in groves and vineyards, farm machinery, canneries, cotton gins, wineries, packing sheds, and dehydrators, the institutionalized features of an area ordinarily determine which crops the farmers will grow. In addition, the employer's practices and policies concerning labor are usually written into land values and there preserved. Consequently the operator's independence is prescribed within rather narrow limits.

In some sections of the Western specialty-crop area the family-type general farm still prevails. These farms predominate in Utah and Idaho, where the influence of the Mormon Church is strongest. Farming in these sections is not only a source of income, but also a way of life. The family farm promotes family unity and strength, and self-sufficiency insures a larger degree of security. Even these sections show a gradual shift toward more intensive use of the land, crop specialization, and greater dependence upon hired workers. Some Mormon farmers have large acreages of potatoes, peas, or sugar beets which makes them rely upon seasonal labor, particularly during the harvest season.

Agriculture in most of the Western specialty-crop areas is highly speculative because specialty crops are often luxury foods whose prices fluctuate with supply and demand conditions. Since many of the costs in irrigated farming are fixed and the shipment of products to distant Eastern markets imposes additional fixed costs, a slight decrease in retail prices may cut deeply into the farmer's profits. Specialization also magnifies the farmer's ordinary hazards. A loss in one crop can seldom be recovered by a profit in another. It often happens that some farmers make fabulous profits in a season that brings complete ruin to those who estimated — or guessed — incorrectly about costs and market returns.

Bankruptcy has introduced banks, loan companies, and other investors to agriculture. Many bankers, business men, and other nonfarmers entrusted their farms to competent managers. Some successful farm operators have increased their holdings by purchasing bankrupt lands. These operations have resulted in several large farm businesses. Not infrequently, the owners and operators of the largest farm units have bought packing sheds, organized private shipping outlets, and even established labor recruiting organizations.

Strenuous efforts have been made to reduce the speculative nature of specialty-farm operations. Large associations of citrus fruit, vegetable, and nut producers have entered into marketing agreements to regulate the amount of a crop to be placed on the market at a given time. Small growers have formed co-operatives to handle their shipping and marketing requirements. Tariffs restricting the importation of competitive products from foreign countries have been obtained. When it would not curtail specialization of production the employment of hired workers has been made more regular. Despite these efforts, however, specialty-crop farmers still must operate under highly speculative conditions.

Most farms in the Western specialty-crop areas are quite small. Over one half of the farms in California consisted of less than thirty acres, according to the 1945 Census of Agriculture. Many fruit, dairy, and poultry farms on the West Coast consist of only ten to forty acres. Many northern farms are also small, as Mormons tend to divide their holdings in order to provide farmsteads for their children.

Even though the majority of the farms in this area are small, a large part of the total production comes from extremely large farms. In 1939, 35 per cent of the crops harvested in California were grown on farms consisting of a thousand acres or more. The presence of these huge farms is partially a result of the area's agricultural economy, and partially of historical development. Spanish and Mexican land grants of considerable size were recognized by the United States government, while large grants of land were also made to railroads and individual states. The practice of breaking up public land into small units for transfer to private ownership was less common in Western specialty-crop areas than in the corn belt. The existence of many small farms and large farms means that there are proportionately fewer medium-sized farms: in 1945, four fifths of the farms in the United States had between 70 and 259 acres; in California less than two fifths were in that size category.

Since harvest seasons vary from crop to crop, each crop and each locality has its own annual farm work cycle. Vegetables are harvested during the winter in the Imperial and Salt River Valleys; asparagus is cut during the spring in the Stockton area; cherries are picked a short time later; and many crops mature in the late summer and fall. Lemons can be picked almost any time in the year, while alfalfa may be cut as many as six times a year in the southern part of the area.

The harvesting schedule of crops determines the migratory cycles of farm workers. Some laborers, specializing in particular crops and operations, follow fairly definite routes. A large body of workers spend the winter picking cotton, oranges, and vegetables in southern California and Arizona; in the summer and fall they journey northward for the apricot, peach, grape and tomato harvests; often they will move into Idaho and Utah for sugar beets and potatoes, or into Washington to pick apples. Some farm laborers and also some operators engage in nonfarm work during part of the year. Packing sheds, canneries, and sugar beet factories employ many farm people in off seasons, while lumbering, mining, and a growing recreation industry also attract farm laborers and the operators of small farms for part of the year. Over a fifth of the farm operators spend at least one hundred days a year in off-farm work.

Although to a great extent the economy of the Western specialty-crop area can be explained in terms of soil, climate, rainfall, and other physical factors, one should not overlook the important contributions made by the many people of diverse backgrounds who originally settled the land. Irrigation was one of the many arts developed by the Indians. The Spanish who pioneered in the Southwest brought the Catholic religion with them, and gave names to such places as San Jose, San Joaquin, and Los Angeles. Anglo-American culture was introduced to the Western specialty-crop area just a little over one hundred years ago by early fur traders and missionaries. These were followed by a few farmers, who settled the territory now comprising Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Utah. The discovering of gold in 1848, however, sent large numbers of people scurrying West.

Most of the early settlers came from the Northeastern states. In 1850 New York state ranked first as the birthplace of California residents. A few years later the major point of origin was the Middle West. These two sections established the early pattern of rural life in the area – a pattern emphasizing general or self-sufficient farming, free public education, the Protestant religion, the virtue of hard work and the unity of the farm family.

Later many people from the cotton belt moved westward. Their cultural heritage included tendencies toward larger holdings, the use of hired laborers, and the maintenance of class lines, as well as a greater liking for leisure. They mainly influenced the southern edge of the area. During the 1930's newcomers were principally refugees from the parched plains of Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. They had to work as farm laborers, and found their adjustment so difficult that only a few were able to realize their ambition of becoming independent farmers. They have not completely lost, however, their songs, their highly emotional religious faiths, and their insistence upon basic human rights.

Many settlers also came from abroad. England, Germany, Portugal, Holland, Switzerland, Russia, and Italy supplied settlers, and the Western specialty-crop area also has many persons of Chinese, Japanese, Armenian, Indian, and Mexican descent within its borders. Many of the latter groups have closely knit patriarchal family systems and belong to either the Catholic or Buddhist religions. Their assimilation is often not complete. The Orientals remain a distinct group, though some have acquired land and become farm operators. The Mexicans are usually employed as "stoop" laborers.

Much of specialty-crop society is governed by occupational differences, since living conditions, class lines, religious differences, and educational opportunities are greatly influenced by the work a man does. Although the basic cleavage exists between farm operators and hired farm workers, additional distinctions are drawn within each of these groups. For example, hired dairy workers, particularly in the Los Angeles area, occupy a relatively high economic and social position. They are well organized, enjoy good incomes, and are accepted socially wherever they live. On the other hand, Filipino, Mexican, and Negro workers who are usually hired for gang labor, occupy a much lower position. Although they sometimes work in gangs, most dust-bowl refugees prefer to be hired as individuals. They do not generally associate with Filipinos, Mexicans, or Negroes.

Wage rates in the Western specialty-crop area fluctuate greatly along with the prices paid for specialty crops. In general, however, they are relatively high. In spite of this, many migrant labor families – perhaps most — are poorly housed, poorly fed, and poorly clothed. They lack proper medical care and adequate educational opportunities. The seasonal nature of their employment, the disorganization of the labor market, and the high cost of traveling from one job to another result in small annual incomes. Because they seldom remain long in one place, their housing is usually temporary and unsatisfactory. Their children annually lose many days of school for this reason, and the whole family lacks the stability that accompanies permanent residence in a given place. Moreover, farm laborers are considered "outsiders" in most of the areas in which they work and live. Many towns provide separate housing areas for them, which frequently have inadequate sanitary facilities. Families are crowded into cramped quarters, and proper food is seldom prepared. Their community status is therefore low, opportunities for advancement are limited, and they are separated from other members of the community by a wide social distance. The plight of the Joad family in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is not unusual.

Groups and Group Relationships

Social organization in the Western specialty-crop area largely follows urban patterns. Special-interest groups dominate the organizational life of the farm family, and the farm operator and his family participate in their many formal organizations as individuals rather than as family units. The cumulative group structure, which dominates the eastern, self-sufficing farming area and of which remnants can be found in the corn belt, has been entirely lost in the Western specialty-crop area, with the exception of some Mormon communities and a few closely knit nationality groups. Few bonds unite the farm families in the areas; rural neighborhoods, so important to farm people elsewhere, occupy a secondary position in specialty-crop society.

One reason for the urban character of social organization in the areas, is that many farm operators have found it necessary or desirable to locate in towns and cities. Often it is important for the larger specialty-crop farmer to maintain business contacts in the city where his products are shipped, his equipment purchased, and his laborers hired. He may also desire to live in a town so that his children can attend better schools and his family can more easily meet their health and recreation needs. His settlement in a town or city is also a result of the fact that his managerial function has come to overshadow his other duties. Farm laborers also tend to live in urban places. Almost every city has its "skid row," and almost every village has an "across-the-tracks" district comprised of farm laborers.

These characteristic settlement patterns make rural neighborhoods in the specialty-crop areas few and far between. Many single-crop specialists move their operations from place to place as their particular kind of land becomes available. In the Imperial Valley for instance, vegetable growers seldom operate the same farm unit for more than two or three years. When farmers move about so frequently it is difficult for them to become community conscious or for a community to be conscious of them. Moreover, informal social participation is, for several reasons, very restricted. For one thing, the contractual businesslike atmosphere of the operator's occupational role is carried over into his social life. For another, farm families have only a few common interests and are seldom thrown together socially in rural areas. Since exchange of work and sharing of equipment do not have a prominent place in specialty-crop production, there are limited opportunities for friendly association based on occupational interests.

Most of the formal organizations here are established to meet a specific need, supported by those who feel this need most distinctly. The same specialization and diversification that characterize agriculture in the area can be found in its formal organizations which seldom expand the original program to include other interests.

Each agricultural enterprise has its special commodity groups established to tackle problems in one particular specialty crop. These commodity organizations are most articulate, on the state and national level. Special committees and organizations are also set up to handle farm labor recruitment and placement. Buying and selling co-operatives are prevalent as well. In addition, many farmers take part in service clubs, civic organizations, veterans groups, and social clubs. In some rural towns and cities more than one half of the members of Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions clubs are farmers; and Chambers of Commerce are frequently dominated by farm people. The Farm Bureau and Grange have a large following, and other farm groups such as the Associated Farmers have been organized to meet special problems.

Farm women in the city, and many in rural areas, belong to organizations, in company with nonfarm women. Women's clubs, improvement associations, political organizations, and social clubs predominate. In the specialty-crop areas the socially elite among farm people have many interests outside the areas. Some of the large operators maintain business connections in Chicago, New York, and Washington, around which their social life revolves. Their children attend eastern universities and their wives make extended visits to other parts of the country.

In Utah and Idaho, however, where community solidarity is stronger, more emphasis is placed upon informal neighborhood social life. Formal organizations play a less important role here. This condition can be traced to the influence of the Mormon Church which attends to the religious needs of its members, and also influences their economic, family, recreational, and social life. Among the Mennonite settlers and some nationality groups, particularly Portuguese dairy farmers, social organization is more informal and more personal.

There is little participation in formal organizations among farm laborers. Migrants with limited resources lack the opportunities for such participation, and a well-ordered social life is beyond their means. Informal and often fleeting visits with other laborers, therefore, plus such commercial recreation as they can afford, are their only avenues of social participation. For some, particularly the Mexicans, the Catholic religion helps fill otherwise empty lives. It is not surprising that gambling is a prominent form of recreation, especially among Filipinos, many of whom are unmarried.

Schools in the Western specialty-crop areas are reflections of the generally high incomes and progressiveness of the area, and reflect the economic and social cleavages. In spite of many attempts for well-qualified teachers, in general highly paid, the consolidation of rural schools, good equipment and careful selection of subjects, there are educational problems. Although segregation of children of farm laborer families is not permitted in theory, in practice it is occasionally accomplished by residential distribution. While some school authorities will attempt to keep the children of migrant laborers in school, in other places their attendance is of less concern. An influx of these children into a school district for only a portion of the school year frequently taxes local school facilities and threatens school standards.

As for churches, for the most part there are only a few in the open country, and those in towns seldom attract many farmers. In the Mormon areas, however, church attendance is high and religion plays a great part in the lives of the rural people. Dust-bowl migrants, identified primarily in the Southwest with Methodist and Baptist Churches, have turned in great numbers to the Pentecostal Church groups, to the Four Square Gospel, Nazarene, Holiness, and other evangelistic sects. Mexicans, Italians, and Portuguese generally join the Roman Catholic Church, while the Japanese have Buddhist temples in a few places.

Attitudes and Values of the People

In many respects the Western specialty-crop areas exhibit the youthful vigor, optimism, and enthusiasm characteristic of a frontier society. The inhabitants are inclined to believe that the climate is superior, the sun brighter, the roads better, the residents healthier, happier, and more broad-minded than elsewhere. Whatever it is, here it is more so. This optimism is not shared equally by all residents, but it does extend over large segments of specialty-crop society.

The people, some of whom have seen sand and sagebrush turned into broad fertile fields almost overnight, value accomplishment highly. Since they are proud of having created their own success, a high premium is placed upon the individual. Farmers generally believe that a man will succeed if he knows the best production techniques, is "on his toes" about prices and markets, understands how to handle men and machines, and if he is alert and aggressive. The welfare of the individual, of his family and his economic group thus takes precedence over the welfare of the community as a whole. Such an individualistic society esteems farming as a way of life less than most type-farming areas. Land and labor are looked upon purely as production items. Farmers usually take more pride in the immediate evidences of production – fruit or nut trees, dairy herds, and growing vegetables – than in ownership of farm land. The Mormon, Mennonite, and most foreign-born farmers again constitute the exception, treasuring land ownership.

Western farmers, having seen progress made and having tasted the rewards, are keenly aware of the importance of scientific advance. They employ experts in farm management and distribution, they enlist the services of trained agricultural specialists, and they experiment with the newest types of farm machinery. Farm operators take pride in being able themselves to handle motorized equipment, and some have their own machine shops in which to develop new devices to fit their particular needs. In keeping with this respect for scientific advance, most farm operators place a high value on education. Their children are sent to public schools and often to colleges and universities as well to learn modern methods. Farm laborers tend to hope that education will enable their children to advance in the social hierarchy, although they readily take their children out of school to help in the harvest, later sincerely regretting that their children have not been able to graduate.

Despite a progressive outlook with regard to farming operations, there is a strong element of conservatism. The radical economic and political schemes that had their origin on the West Coast received most of their support, by and large, from the urban population. Rural people did not, for the most part, support The Townsend Plan, E.P.I.C. (End Poverty in California), Ham and Eggs, Funny Money, or the single tax. As Paul Taylor points out in the *Annals* (November 1946), the rural population has also held back some badly needed reforms in California. The truth is that many operators are afraid of suggested social reforms, even those who favor an improvement in the living conditions of workers usually want to institute the changes themselves rather than have them brought about by the government or by organized labor.

This materialistic philosophy of life coupled with pressures of a highly industrialized and competitive agriculture leave little time for the development of art and literature. The motion picture industry at Hollywood and the art colonies at Carmel-by-the-sea and Santa Barbara only occasionally focus attention upon rural life in the Western specialty-crop area. Such beauties of nature as Yosemite Park, Mount Hood, The Great Salt Lake, and the redwood forests seem to overshadow the feeble beginnings man has made in taming his environment.

Trends

The relative newness of the Western specialty-crop area, which has been described as the frontier at the end of the frontier, makes hazardous the prediction of trends. New people are moving into the areas every decade, and less than one half of the residents were born in the state where they now live. Additional areas will be brought into production as irrigation is extended. The huge Columbia Basin project occupying one million acres in Washington and the irrigation developments planned for the Central Valley of California are certain to increase specialty-crop production and to enlarge its influence. Meanwhile specialization of production, use of hired farm workers, the speculative aspect, and urban values and attitudes are becoming more pronounced. Resistance on the part of distinct cultural groups, such as Mormons, Mennonites and some foreign-born farmers, has been breaking down. Physical and economic factors encourage more intensive use of land, even in those areas where general family farms are well established. It is significant that social and cultural factors have managed to battle these economic trends as long as they have.

Mechanization and modernization proceed rapidly. Potato combines, mechanical cotton pickers, dehydrators, and pickup balers are increasing; sugar-beet growers now use special equipment to top and load beets; and large land-leveling equipment is becoming popular on large farms. Even small ones now have light garden tractors. Airplanes are being used to sow rice and spray trees and crops, air transport may be developed for the marketing of winter vegetables and other luxury items.

Although specialization is firmly entrenched, some diversification on individual farms is now taking place. Growers who own or lease large areas of land have found it profitable to follow crop-rotation practices without relinquishing control of the land. In order to do this they have begun to hire specialists as supervisors. This diversification is obviously impossible for operators of the smaller farm units.

Future prospects regarding the farm labor situation do not look bright. A new period of farm labor strife may be brought about by the large migration of war workers to the West Coast, the use of Mexican nationals to harvest crops in some areas, and the influx of others into the farm labor force for lack of any other choice. Escapist religions, share-the-wealth plans, and other expressions of social unrest may again find a following in the Western specialty-crop area. Considering the whole picture, however, each additional wave of newcomers will have progressively less effect, for a mold for the culture of the Western specialty-crop area has already been cast. New changes will not affect the basic pattern.

CHAPTER 26

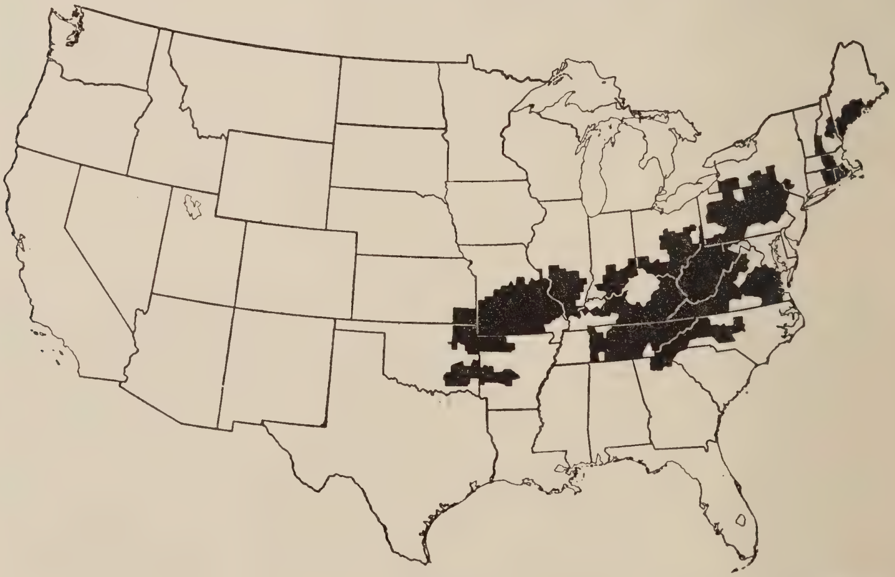
THE GENERAL AND SELF-SUFFICING AREAS

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER

The General and Self-Sufficing Country

The general and self-sufficing areas are in the East-central part of the United States. They are bordered on the north by the dairy areas and the corn belt and on the south by the cotton belt. They include most of the rougher uplands east of the Rockies.[1]

As the name suggests, these areas are composed of general and self-sufficing farms rather than farms producing particular products such as corn,



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture ,

Fig. 47 GENERAL AND SELF-SUFFICING AREAS

[1] See map (Fig. 47).

cotton, wheat, tobacco, or livestock. From one point of view, they are the counties in eastern America left over after the delineation of the major type-farming areas which are dominated by some one agricultural enterprise. Rural life in the various sections of the general and self-sufficing areas has many characteristics in common and constitutes a major type-farming region.

The per capita basic land resource is more limited in the general and self-sufficing areas than in any other major type-farming region. Farms are usually small and fields are irregular in size and shape, while most of the tools and equipment are simple. As would be expected, farm incomes are lower than in any other type-farming area. But since farm families do most of their own work and produce much of their own food, they usually live better than their cash or gross farm incomes would suggest. Moreover, the tendency for farm incomes to be supplemented by off-farm work is greater than in any other part of the nation.

The general and self-sufficing areas correspond to those parts of the country where self-sufficing and part-time farmers are most numerous. The noncommercial character of agriculture in the areas is largely the result of the ruggedness of the countryside and the necessary methods of farming. The mountainous terrain makes transportation difficult and roads both crooked and costly to build and maintain. Many people in the rougher and more remote sections have few contacts with the outside world. In the localities where isolation is greatest, home handicrafts are still carried on to a large extent. Grist mills, smokehouses, and springhouses are prevalent. Here, too, one often hears the distinctive dialects commonly associated, in ballads and tales, with the frontier and early settlements. Folk dances and mountain music are popular in many places.

Some physical handicaps have their positive value, however. The rugged and high mountainous areas, such as the Great Smokies of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee as well as the top of the Blue Ridge in Virginia attract the tourist trade. The high rainfall that results in soil erosion and costly road maintenance also causes forests to grow rapidly and provides the water for great hydro-electric developments.

In valleys here and there throughout the areas, the farmers have larger farms, use more machinery, and receive higher incomes than the farmers in the hilly sections. Farming operations of many of the larger valley farmers, in fact, are often more like those of the corn or dairy farmers than like those of their neighbors in the hills nearby. But the larger valley farmers are in a decided numerical minority in the areas. Rarely are enough of them concentrated in one locality to do more than modify the ways of life that have developed among the general and self-sufficing farmers of the section.

Another important variation occurring within the areas is that general farming is more common in the northern and eastern parts, while self-sufficient farming is concentrated in the mountainous portions of the southern Appalachians and the Ozarks. In this chapter particular attention will be given to the southern, self-sufficing portions of the areas. For, as was pointed out in the chapter on the dairy areas, dairying is becoming more and more important in most of the general farming areas of Pennsylvania as well as in those farther north, so that farm management experts by 1948 generally referred to these sections as parts of the dairy areas.

In most parts of the general and self-sufficing areas, there is relatively little formally organized group activity among the people except for schools and churches, which often have limited activities and programs. There is, however, much informal association, such as visiting and swapping farm work in busy seasons, and many of the men and boys meet at a local store or hunt in small groups. In these areas, especially where self-sufficing farming predominates, leisure is taken for granted and constitutes neither a luxury nor unemployment.

The people have a deep attachment to their way of life and to their home localities. Since family ties are strong, there is much visiting among relatives. Children usually either settle down nearby, or, if they leave the locality, they make frequent trips back home when they first move away. It is this strong familism that has sometimes caused long and bitter family feuds.

For many decades there has been a general off-farm migration, especially by unattached persons. Their destinations have usually been the cities in the areas and beyond. Since they have been accustomed to strong family ties and a highly personal way of life, they often find it difficult to adjust to city life. Many return, especially in times of unemployment or other uncertainty. The number of small farms increased faster in the southern Appalachians during the depression years between 1930 and 1935 than anywhere else in the country.

The people get along with what they have. They are independent and resourceful, often silent and reserved. They rely upon traditional ways of doing things and look askance at speculation.

The People and Their Work on the Land

A fifth of the nation's farm families live in the 552 counties that compose the general and self-sufficing areas. These include most of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, at least half of Missouri and Ohio, and parts of Vermont, New Hampshire and eleven other states from Oklahoma to Maine. Practically all the mountainous portions of eastern America, including the rougher uplands, are in the general and self-sufficing areas, except for the relatively small, specialized, tobacco-growing sections of Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia, and a few specialized dairy sections near the big cities in the Northeast. Farming and other rural activities take their character partly from the varied physical features of the areas, and partly from the date of settlement and the backgrounds of the people, which vary in the different sections – New England, the Allegheny portions of the Middle Atlantic States, the southern Appalachians, and the Ozark-Ouachita highlands.

Most of the people are descendants of families who originated in northwestern Europe, especially in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (Scotch-Irish), while smaller numbers trace their origins back to Germany, Wales, Holland, and the French Huguenots. Many of their forebears came to this country in the colonial period. Their descendants have been living in the areas for several generations. They have maintained many of the early American ways of doing things. Many of the first settlers came to America in order to escape distasteful political, religious, or economic conditions in their home countries. Unable to find a satisfactory location east of the mountains, or dissatisfied with conditions in the older settled areas, they started for the frontier. Some settled in the highlands and mountains because they preferred the independent and self-sufficient way of life that this type of country afforded, while others got stranded there on their way west. As for the nonwhite population (in 1940 it constituted 5.5 per cent), practically all of it lives in the southern portions of the areas next to the cotton belt. Only about 5 per cent of the total population is foreign-born.

The uplands of New England and the Alleghenies were settled in the eighteenth century. There the population, still predominantly of early American stock, was enlarged in the 1880's by foreign-born whites who came from northern and central Europe and who settled mainly in the urban centers of New England or in the mining areas of Pennsylvania. Settlement of the southern Appalachians began prior to the American Revolution, but the greatest influx of settlers came during the first fifty years of the new republic. Many of the people were descendants of the Scotch-Irish and Germans who had earlier pushed into the hills and mountains of Pennsylvania. In search of new land, they often entered the southern highlands by way of the valleys of Virginia and eastern Tennessee. In this same period, white settlers from the seaboard sections of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia moved across the coastal plains, up the Piedmont, and into the mountains. Among them were small landowners who sought better opportunities outside of the cotton belt and landless whites who had tired of the competition with slaves in the plantation economy. The settlement of the Ozark-Ouachita highlands (hereafter referred to as the Ozarks) got under way in the early 1800's, when people from the Appalachian highlands began moving westward across the Mississippi River into the hilly sections of Missouri, Arkansas, and eastern Oklahoma. They built homes and institutions that perpetuated the dominant traditions of the eastern highlands. Some farm families also entered these sections direct from the cotton belt and from the corn belt.

Throughout the highland areas from New England to eastern Oklahoma, the pattern of settlement was much the same. At first land was cheap and farms were often large, sometimes consisting of 500 acres or more. This was especially true in the southern and more recently settled portions. Most of the earliest settlers located in the valleys and larger hollows and they usually lived well enough, for the bottom lands were highly productive and wild game and fish were plentiful. But with each succeeding generation, as the land was subdivided to give the young couples a start in life, farmsteads were established farther and farther up the coves, and more hillside land was cleared for fields. Thus with the passage of years farms have become smaller and less productive. Now the number of acres in crop land per farm is small, frequently under ten acres per farm in many sections, especially the southern Appalachians. Moreover, hillside farms have suffered considerable loss of soil fertility through erosion. Good farming land is scarce in many parts of the areas. Narrow-valley or bottom-land farms, or even farms that have a few acres of bottom land in addition to hill land, are therefore prized. Farmers often locate their houses and barns on the lower slopes of a hill in order to leave all of the fertile bottom land for crops. Roads are often located on the lower reaches of the hills for the same reason. In some isolated sections streambeds are used for roads. This is especially common in the Cumberland Plateau where the rock strata lie horizontal and provide a naturally smooth creek-bottom roadbed.

Although the general and self-sufficing areas have no single dominant crop or livestock enterprise, corn is grown throughout the areas for meal, feed, and fodder; hay is produced for home livestock; and pastures are common. Potatoes, garden vegetables, fruits, and honey are produced widely for family use. Most farms have a cow or two, and chickens. Home-butchering of hogs is a common practice. A great proportion of the land is in timber, most of which is second growth; small sawmills are found everywhere.

There is some commercial farming in the larger valleys and near the bigger cities. But most farm products sold are the small surpluses of the general and subsistence farms, such as extra chickens, eggs, milk, country butter, pasture-fed beef, calves and cows, and smoke-cured meats. A wide variety of wood products — cross ties, mine props, barrel staves, basket splits, pulpwood, acid wood, and wood for fuel — are also sold. General and subsistence farming are facilitated by the presence of local sawmills and of grist and flour mills, often still powered by water, and by the use on farms of springhouses to keep milk and butter cool, of smokehouses to cure meat, and of cellars to store potatoes and vegetables. The production of truly commercial farm products is localized, with fluid milk being common in New England and in much of the Alleghenies, apples and peaches in some sections of the Alleghenies and southern Appalachians, vegetables in the most eastern portions of the areas from Virginia north, tobacco at a few places in New England and the Alleghenies and in rather widespread sections of the southern Appalachians, maple sugar in New England, and berries and vegetables in certain sections of western Tennessee and in northwestern Arkansas.

The gross value of farm products per family in the general and self-sufficing areas is lower than in any other type-farming area in the country. In 1944, the value of farm products sold, traded, and used was under $600 for 40 per cent of all farms, and under $1,500 for 70 per cent. Gross farm incomes in a number of the New England and upper Allegheny counties, however, were up to the national average, despite the fact that the average for the areas as a whole was but a little more than half the national average. Farm incomes were progressively lower to the south and west and as the distances from the cities increased, with the average gross farm income in the poorest counties being but one fifth that in the most prosperous ones.

The proportion of the gross value of farm products that is consumed by the farm households is larger in these areas than in any other major type-farming region of the country. In 1944 over a fifth of the products were home-consumed in the areas as a whole; the lowest proportions were in the sections where gross incomes were largest, and the highest, where incomes were smallest. Thus the range was from one sixth or less in the New England and Allegheny counties that are near large urban centers, where the values of farm products were largest, to two thirds or more in the isolated rural Appalachian and Ozark counties, where the values of farm products were lowest.

Although the farm tools and equipment used are rather simple in most parts of the areas, in some sections a third or more of the farmers have tractors. This situation exists primarily in the northern, general farming sections where dairying is on the increase, and in the counties with large valleys. But in some of the southern, mountainous counties, 2 per cent or less of the farmers have tractors. In these localities hand equipment and sleds are common, while in nearly all sections of the areas one- and two-horse plows and horse-drawn wagons are standard. Some farmers whose acreages are too small to support a tractor have their spring plowing and other farm work done by a neighbor on a custom basis. Only on the larger farms in the valleys, near the cities, and in some of the scattered commercial farming areas are tractors and multiple horse-drawn mechanical equipment becoming common.

With birth rates remaining high and farming opportunities long at a standstill in many places, or even shrinking in others because of hillside erosion, there has been a constant off-farm migration. Sometimes whole families have migrated, but more often it has been the unattached young men and women who have left the farms. Great numbers flocked into the cities during the prosperous World War I and II periods. In fact, as much as a fourth or more of the total population left some of the mountain counties during World War II. Most of the migrants went into the urban centers within the areas and into the North and Middle West, especially the Detroit area. As we remarked earlier, many who leave the farms never come back except for an occasional visit. Others, who find it difficult to adjust in the cities, return home intermittently or permanently, especially when work opportunities for unskilled and semiskilled labor shrink.

We have noted also that in the general and self-sufficing areas the proportion of the farm operators who supplement their farm incomes with off-farm work is larger than in any of the other major type-farming areas. In 1944, nearly one fourth of all the farm operators worked off their own farms for 100 days or more. This work was of various types. In sections near industrial towns, most common in New England and the Alleghenies, many farmers commuted to work, or even left their farms for a part of the year. Where timber still exists — most extensively in the southern Appalachians — local employment in sawmills and other wood work is common. Numerous Tennessee Valley farmers worked as laborers in the construction of TVA dams. Though some farm operators work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, and southern Illinois, most mining is done by full-time miners living in the mining villages. Although many miners keep a cow, a pig or two, and a few chickens, and some do gardening, most of them do not farm enough to be classified as farm operators.

The ease with which water power could be obtained resulted in the early establishment throughout the areas of grist and flour mills, sawmills and numerous small manufacturing concerns. Many small enterprises sprang up largely from the jack-of-all-trades character of the general and self-sufficient farmers, who are handy at making "contraptions." Practical experience made rural people apt workers in the early textile industry of New England, later in the giant iron and steel industries of the Pittsburgh area, and still later in the legion of smaller textile, steel, wood, leather, and other industries which now afford a livelihood for many of the rural and urban residents of the areas.

Other sources of income include the home production of saleable handicraft products, such as rugs, pottery, rustic furniture, and various wood trinkets. This type of work is especially common in some of the localities frequented by tourists, such as New England, and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park area in the southern Appalachians, and also around some of the mountain schools such as Berea College in Kentucky, which have long emphasized weaving and other handicraft production. In these same areas, many farm operators supplement their farm incomes by providing room and board for tourists, or by selling farm products to them. Still other sources of income are pensions, military service, public assistance, political office and allied activities. Some farmers carry mail, drive school busses, do road work, serve on juries and on agricultural committees, or have jobs as postmasters or storekeepers. The illegal making of whiskey in small local stills, usually referred to as "moonshining," has long been a common means of supplementing the family income in some of the more isolated sections of the southern Appalachians and the Ozarks. Some families, particularly in the lower-income areas of Kentucky, when not busy on their own farms, go each summer into the southern portions of the corn belt to help harvest tomatoes and other perishable summer crops. And numerous farm operators in the areas leave home more or less regularly for industrial work during the winter and return in the spring for crops. Some subsistence farmers, along with rural-nonfarm dwellers, follow the reverse order: they leave home each summer for agricultural work in other areas and return for the winter to await the next season's opportunities for farm work away from home.

These varied ways of life dictate an annual cycle of activities which is generally determined by the planting, cultivating, gathering, and marketing or storing of crops. Thus, spring increases the tempo of life, for crops must then be planted and cultivated. All members of the family often participate in the spring rush. By midsummer, cultivation is completed, the first crop of hay has been cut and stacked, and most of the home canning has been done. Then comes a slack-work season, during which there are more group activities than at any other time of year. The fall is again a busy time, for then corn is gathered, potatoes are dug, vegetables are stored for the winter; in some sections there is tobacco to be cut, sorghum syrup made, late hay mown, and wheat sown. Harvesting over, those who plan to do winter work away from home leave for the city, while the migrant farm laborers and their families return to wait for spring. During the winter there is some hunting and trapping. Most group activities decrease, especially in the poorer sections of the southern Appalachians and Ozarks, where roads are worst.

Farmers in the general and self-sufficing areas are usually free to set their own pace. Almost three fourths are owners, and nearly all farm primarily to supply their own families and in order to have a little to sell for their minimum cash needs. In the southern parts of the areas, especially the scattered larger valleys and localities, commercial farming is most marked and farm tenancy is most common.

Living standards are generally low. The houses of the hill and mountain families and of many valley residents are small, often unpainted, meagerly furnished, and without modern conveniences. Educational attainments are frequently slight, particularly in the southern sections. The rural-farm level of living index for the areas is below the general national average; for even though many of the counties in New England and the Alleghenies are above that average, practically all of the counties in the southern Appalachians and Ozarks are below it — many of them far below it.

The low gross value of farm production, however, means least in terms of low levels of living in the isolated sections where the people follow the most self-sufficient types of farming, consume the greatest proportion of their own products, make fewest purchases, do most of their work themselves, and also swap off with neighbors in house construction, road maintenance, and so on. A springhouse or smokehouse, for instance, may increase greatly the real value of home-grown milk and meat, and also of any surplus that may be sold. The fixed value that might be placed on each gallon of milk and on each pound of meat, therefore, may not be an accurate indication of actual worth. The importance of the live-at-home farm and home practices of the farmers in the general and self-sufficing areas is shown by the relatively high rural-farm level of living index, in spite of the smallest average gross farm income of any major type-farming region in the country. In 1945 its level of living index was 74, as compared to the cotton belt figure of 53. The national average was 100.

Groups, Group Relationships, and Organization

Groups in the general and self-sufficing areas are unusually small; the relationships between the farm people themselves are characterized, as we have said earlier in this chapter, by a great deal of informal association. Even most business relations between the rural people and the town merchants are direct and informal and require a minimum of organization.

In the larger valleys and in the more thickly populated areas near the larger cities where the roads are good, community life tends to be more or less similar to that in the corn belt, the dairy areas, or the cotton belt, depending upon which one of these major type-farming areas the community is nearest. But rural life in the self-sufficing areas, however, is generally different in character from rural life in all other type-farming areas. Special attention will therefore be given to it.

Physical barriers such as mountains, steep hills, forests, and streams make travel and communication difficult in many of the sections where self-sufficing farming is dominant. For not only is travel often difficult over the hills to the next creek, or to town, but also the distances around these barriers are often great, and at times the roads are impassable. Moreover, telephones are not common in farmhouses. Under these conditions only the more urgent matters cause travel.

But these restricted contacts between locality groupings increase the informality and intimacy of life in the immediate locality. So on their creek, in their valley, or up their cove, the people all know each other and each other's affairs. Distances within these boundaries are relatively short, and much of the social life of the group consists of getting together at country stores and post offices, the schoolhouse, or at chance meetings along the roads. In the most isolated sections even political campaigns are usually carried on through informal contacts at these places rather than through formal campaign meetings.

In the mountains and highlands the family unit is more predominant and its influence more pervasive than in any other major type-farming area in the country. The members of a family are with each other constantly and have a great deal in common. The family often works as a unit; during busier seasons most of the family is in the field helping with the crops. Limited means of transportation frequently cause the family to travel as a unit, whether to a meeting at the schoolhouse, a church service, to town, or for a visit to an uncle, grandparents, or cousins. It is noticeable that with increased means of travel, the young people are going more by themselves. Young married couples frequently start farming in the locality in which they were reared, and in many communities practically all of the families are related. As for group activities in these localities, they are usually determined by the older male heads of these families.

The schoolhouse in the general and self-sufficing areas is a place with many meaningful associations. In sections that have limited housing facilities for group meetings, the small schoolhouse in the open country, and some consolidated schools in rural villages, are the principal centers for such community activities as pie suppers, entertainments for children and adults, agricultural meetings, or other group affairs.

For many rural children, especially those in the southern Appalachians and Ozarks, the local one-room school is the only one they ever know, for limited resources do not permit much money to be spent for education. Funds available from taxes for school activities, school buildings, and teachers' salaries are often quite limited. Where state educational funds are shared with local schools, more extensive school activities and facilities are available to rural children. In any case, school attendance is often irregular in the fall because of farm work and in winter because of bad roads.

The number, size, and location of rural schoolhouses vary with the school system. For example, in states such as North Carolina and West Virginia school systems are operated on a state level. Much consolidation of small schools has occurred, and children from many neighborhoods attend a single rural school. In other states, such as Kentucky and Virginia, schools are operated by local governmental units, are often small, and many of them are attended largely by children living in a single neighborhood. New England schools are operated on the town (township) basis, and some of the least populous towns arrange for the children to attend a high school in an adjoining town.

Throughout the mountain and hill areas, there are church groups in the open country. These groups are predominantly Protestant, of the Baptist or Methodist denominations. But here and there, particularly among the lower-income families in industrial communities, new sects are being organized. In the more isolated sections of the Southern mountains, mission work has long been carried on by a number of central church bodies, and schoolhouses are often used for religious meetings. As for general practice, Sunday schools are held every Sunday, with preaching once or twice a month, although in winter the preacher sometimes may not be able to come because of bad roads. The activities of numerous rural churches are also limited by the fact that many of their ministers have little formal training, and must spend much of their time working in other occupations, including farming. The opportunity to visit before and after the church service offers the rural people one of their best chances to get together socially, a highly prized privilege.

Group activities of all types, church and otherwise, are most prevalent in the summer slack-work period after the crops have been laid by and before the corn harvest begins. At this time of year, dry roads facilitate travel. It is then that a week or ten-day series of revival meetings is held in most rural churches. Family reunions and family visiting are also widespread at this time. In some sections schools start in summer so that children will not have to go in winter when bad weather blocks the roads. Singing conventions, pie suppers, bazaars, and socials are also part of the activities. Memorial services may be held then for those who died during the winter or when it was not convenient to conduct such services.

During the winter slack-work period, when back roads are often poor, group activities are limited. But hog killings on cold mornings are shared by neighboring families, and although game is not as plentiful as it used to be in many sections, hunting still maintains its place as an important means of obtaining fresh meat. Rabbits and squirrels are plentiful nearly everywhere; partridges and wild turkeys are found in some localities; and fox and deer hunting are important winter sports events in some communities. Animals such as coons, opossums, minks, weasels, and skunks are often killed for pelts.

Farmers' co-operatives are most common in the northern and eastern portions of the areas and least common in the southern and western parts. These co-operatives feature the sale of farmers' supplies, and in some localities they have begun to market farm produce. The Grange has a long history of activity in the New England and Allegheny sections, while the Farm Bureau is active in scattered counties throughout the areas. But in most parts of the areas there is little farmer participation in the organized activities of the town people. The meetings that farmers do have in towns are limited largely to those related to farming.

The county-seat town is important throughout the areas as a trading center and, except in New England, as the site of the courthouse, where the local officials have their headquarters. In fact, in many hill sections, court-week, which is usually held semiannually, attracts great crowds of farmers. The county-seat town is also of importance as the place where the county representatives of the various farm programs have their offices. Moreover, it is the most common place for farmers to hold agricultural meetings, the most likely place for them to have their co-operative store if there is one in the county, and the place where lawyers and doctors usually live.

In New England, most towns and villages are important as trading centers and also as the center of town (township) government. The villages here are closer together than those in any other parts of the areas, and their functions are much more numerous and more formalized, so that the social organization of this part of the general and self-sufficing areas has a distinctive character. Most public services are maintained by the town. The memberships of the churches commonly parallel town boundaries. Although the agricultural agencies, farmers' organizations, health programs, and welfare activities have their county organizations, they are often also tied in with the town, which in New England is the most common local administrative unit, just as the county is in the remainder of the areas.

Since in the more isolated portions of the southern hill country only limited demands have traditionally been made upon the county organizations and their officials, and since New England towns are so small, the political functioning is of the personal and informal type which has characterized the give-and-take in the everyday life of the people in these localities. Even so, expanded governmental programs of recent years have made the county take on greater significance. Especially important have been the various activities of the Federal government and of state agencies which are administered by representatives in the county. During the middle and late 1930's the WPA activities, administered on the basis of county units, had considerable impact. In the counties in the areas, the organization of welfare activities that provide assistance to the aged, the blind, and dependent children has further centered the people's attention upon the county.

Local politics are of widespread interest, both in New England towns where the town meeting is a traditional institution, and in the counties in the remainder of the areas. Personal relations and family loyalties are often brought into play. The winner has the satisfaction of personal approval, even though the expenses of winning the election may exceed the income from the office. The modest salaries and commissions of the offices usually afford a means of supplementing regular farm or town incomes, as most town (township) offices and county offices in rural hill sections are part-time rather than full-time jobs.

In the more isolated sections of the Appalachian and Ozark counties, the small trading centers are especially important as meeting places for farm families. Here they sell or exchange their surplus farm products for desired merchandise, and here they meet people from other parts of the county—often to exchange complaints about having too little to sell when prices are good, and too much when prices are poor. For although the sale of miscellaneous farm products in small amounts is simple enough from the standpoint of the traditional local arrangements whereby barter or "prevailing prices" set the procedure, it often leaves the hill farmer convinced that his surpluses are not really wanted. Frequently by the time he has tomatoes, beans, or green corn to sell, the local market is "glutted" and prices are down. The merchant's situation in these isolated areas is often little better. He seldom receives perishable farm produce regularly enough and in sufficient quantities to effect an outside marketing arrangement. These highly personal contacts between farmers and small-town merchants in the seasonal sale of vegetables and farm crops also operate in the sale of butter and eggs, which usually get cheap when the farmer has most to sell. Farm-lot poultry, however, is the standby; it can be sold any week in the year. Livestock may be sold to the town merchants who act as traders or to local truck operators who make rounds through the country gathering up animals to sell in distant markets.

Special groupings are relatively few among mountain and hill people, who give comparatively little consideration to income and tenure differences. In the larger valleys and near the urban centers, where the farmers with the higher incomes usually live and where most of the farm tenants are located, income and tenure differences have more meaning. In these areas it is the members of the larger landowning families who usually serve on various agricultural boards and committees, and who are the most likely to be selected for political office.

Nationality groupings are of importance only in some scattered sections of the southern Appalachians and Ozarks where a few Indian tribes and Negro groups, who have their own limited organizations, are located. In New England, and to a smaller extent in the Alleghenies, however, though the rural population is also made up largely of old-line American stock, there are many distinctive European nationality groups, especially in the industrial and mining towns. Marked differences also occur among the resident rural old-line Americans in many localities. They make a living in various ways; that is, as full-time farmers, part-time farmers, commuters, farmers supplementing their income by accommodating tourists and summer residents, or wealthy owners of rural estates. These occupational differences, often accompanied by marked variations in income, together with differences in family connections, religious affiliations, and cultural backgrounds, produce in New England and the Alleghenies more varied social groupings than are found in those large parts of the southern Appalachians and Ozarks where there is but little industry and where the white people are practically all native-born.

Around the larger cities the contacts of many of the farm people are quite wide and varied. This is also true along the main highways through the hill and mountain country, and in the thickly settled sections with all-weather roads, such as those existing in much of New England and in parts of the Alleghenies, as well as in a few localities in the southern portions of the areas. Moreover, outside influences come into many rural parts of the areas in the form of tourists, summer residents, and people who have jobs in urban centers but live in the rural areas. In the extensive rural sections of the southern Appalachians and Ozarks, and in many of the hillier and more rural parts of the Alleghenies and New England, however, the contacts of the farm people are rather limited. The people in these sections follow a way of life in which most of their satisfactions are secured on the home farm, in the family, and in the immediate locality.

The Attitudes and Values of the People

Throughout the general and self-sufficing areas farmers have a high regard for ownership of land as a means of maintaining a way of life that they cherish. They know that as long as they have a piece of land they will at least have something to eat and a place to stay. This attitude is widespread, despite the large numbers of farmers who found it necessary to supplement their farm incomes by WPA and other public made-work employment during the 1930's. Most farmers take satisfaction in the assumption that in periods of depression they can more or less break even, while in good times they may get ahead, especially if they have a "streak of luck." Working away from home is an accepted practice in most sections, particularly if a portion of the money earned is used to help supplement the income from the home farm. If the job can be near by in a town or in the timber, so much the better; if not, jobs at a distance are accepted. Special respect, however, is usually accorded to the farmer who makes a living on his own farm without doing off-farm work.

Most rural families in the areas are accustomed to meager physical resources and relatively few facilities. They have a philosophy of making the best of things as they are. They may be "down" but they are seldom "out." This assurance that they can make some kind of a living is one of the chief factors that bring migrants back from the industrial centers to the hills in time of depression. They cherish their independence and dislike accepting relief of any type; so when industrial employment declined in the 1930's, many returned home, not because their incomes would be greater than relief in the cities, but because they felt that by returning, they could take care of themselves.

Above all else, the rural people in the hills like life there because it affords freedom of thought and action. They are their own bosses. Frugal, independent, they put a value on staying out of debt and are generally satisfied with a rather simple way of life. Nor are they speculators, either in making a living or otherwise. Their desire for certainty permeates their attitudes and actions. There is a strong resistance to change in most of the more isolated sections of the areas. The people do not know what to expect from the new; a failure might be the difference between "getting by" and "not getting by." Thus, they reduce risks to a minimum, preferring the tried and proved procedures and techniques. Proposed new ways of doing things are not uncommonly disposed of as being "new fangled," "fads," or "frills."

Self-sufficient and general farming as a way of life in an area of limited per capita farm resources has contributed to the tendency toward psychological self-sufficiency in the personality of the people. It has also affected their attitudes toward outsiders, who are often looked upon as "strangers" or even "foreigners"; toward leisure, which is taken for granted; and toward work, which is to be done without complaint or fanfare in traditional ways which assure results.

A high value is put on education by most of the larger farmers in the areas and also by some of the smaller farmers who make real sacrifices to put their children through school for a "start in life." Other small farmers, however, put the immediate value of their children's labor on the farm above regular school attendance. It is very generally recognized that many of the young people who secure an education will not be satisfied with life in their local communities, and will leave and not return. As for the church, it is highly respected everywhere in the mountains and highlands.

Since the family and informal social groupings are of great importance, most of the people have a deep attachment to their local neighborhoods, villages, streams, mountains, and valleys. Because a high value is placed on doing things in traditional ways and on getting along with circumstances as they are, most leadership resides in the older heads of the larger family groups. The practice of following traditional patterns, with the basic beliefs and procedures usually being handed down from father to son, applies to education and religion no less than to farming and household matters.

Although most of the values of the people throughout the areas emphasize local self-sufficiency and stability, some have implications that point toward change. The very reliance put upon subsistence farming as a means of livelihood for young couples, and as a haven for workers returning from industrial areas during depressions, results in the opening up of more hillside land, an increase of soil erosion, and further depletion of timber and game reserves. Subsistence farms can be readily shared, but the sharing of them leads all the sooner to an intolerable pressure of population on land and therefore either to the necessity of increased outward migration or to the further lowering of local standards of living. A traditional acceptance of living without modern conveniences has also increased the outward migration of the more alert and unattached rural young people. Throughout the years they have gone elsewhere in great numbers to secure the greater physical facilities and wider social contacts not readily available in their home communities.

Ways of life in the hilly Eastern country have been favorite material for storytellers and cartoonists, within and without the region. The popularity of Lil' Abner and his Dawg Patch companions reflects the public interest in mountain stereotypes, while people all over the nation turn the dials on their radios for hillbilly and mountain music. In isolated sections white spirituals are still sung to the accompaniment of a homemade harpsichord; Lamar Stringfield's symphony *From the Southern Mountains* is heard in city concert halls. Ballads and dances that have been handed down in mountain coves from one generation to the next are performed at Asheville's Annual Folk Festival; and prized pieces of wood carving, whittling, pottery, and needle and loom work may be found at roadside gift shops and in the displays of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild.

The vigorous individualism of the hill people has gone down in history through the words and actions of such people as Daniel Boone, David Crockett, and Andrew Jackson; and through such episodes as Shays' Rebellion, the Battle of King's Mountain, and John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry, which has been immortalized in the famous ballad, "John Brown's Body." Many of the best known books of the region, from Hinton Rowan Helper's serious *The Impending Crisis in the South* to Jesse Stuart's jesting *Taps for Private Tussey,* center around the individualism and independence that characterize the self-sufficient farmers. A short listing of these works is sufficient to indicate the extent to which life in this region has found expression in literature. Such a list would include Williamson's *The Woods Colt,* Kantor's *The Voice of Bugle Ann,* Fox's *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine,* Rice's *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch,* Wilson's *Backwoods America,* Sheppard's *Cabins in the Laurel,* Hughes' play *Hell Bent for Heaven,* and many of the best writings of Thomas Wolfe. It is here in the self-sufficing farming sections of the hill country, where life is still unhurried and less crowded and more independent than in any other part of the United States, that some writers speak of the people as our "contemporary ancestors," while the people think of themselves as the "backbone of the nation."

Major Trends

The major trends in the general and self-sufficing areas include a decrease in isolation, continued outward migration of farm people, the expansion of the tourist trade, a growing desire of the people for modern conveniences, a shift away from subsistence farming toward cash crops, and the gradual yielding of traditional attitudes and practices.

Since the ruggedness of the mountains and highlands has always made travel extremely difficult, inhabitants of many sections have lived in varying degrees of isolation until early in the 1900's, when motorcars and good roads invaded many parts of the areas. World War I further expanded the contacts and associations of the highland dwellers who, with the rest of the nation's youths, went into the armed services. Numerous people moved into industrial centers. The depression years brought still more outside contacts to the highlanders, for great numbers of people who had migrated away during the prosperous World War I period returned to the areas; while at the same time, there were new and enlarged agricultural programs, relief projects, and expanded public welfare and public health activities. As ways of meeting emergencies, these programs, which have become generally accepted, were a marked departure from the mutual aid practices of neighbors and from the county paupers' lists and poor farms. During World War II, large numbers of rural youths again went into the armed forces, and numerous other people again left for industrial jobs. If industrial unemployment occurs again, it is generally believed that many of these people, like so many of those who left during the prosperous World War I period, will return.

Although people continue to move toward urban communities, both within and beyond the mountains and highlands, the pressure of population on resources remains great. There is a slight trend toward smaller families, but birth rates are high in most sections. Thus, off-farm work is increasingly an accepted part of the pattern of life in the areas. Except in New England and some parts of the Middle Atlantic states, however, most job opportunities are still at some distance, even though some additional local industries and war plants were established during World War II. The development of the TVA power resources appears to point toward more off-farm work for the rural people in that section of the areas. Meanwhile, the summer tourist trade is increasing in scattered localities in the southern mountains, especially in the Asheville area and around the national forests and parks and the TVA dams. The long established tourist activity in New England continues.

Farm people throughout the general and self-sufficing areas are becoming more and more interested in modern services and conveniences. Good roads and electricity are the most widely desired. An increasingly greater value is being put on cash income, with nonfarm work being regarded as the readiest means of securing it. This desire of the farmers for more cash is causing shifts away from the general and subsistence types of farming to types of farming that produce crops with a cash value. More cash income is also wanted because more flour and other foods are being purchased at the store. In the New England and Allegheny sections, as well as around most of the larger cities in other parts of the areas, farmers are shifting to such specialized enterprises as dairying, poultry raising, and truck farming.

Finally, as greater dependence is placed upon cash incomes, and as contacts between the rural people and outsiders increase, traditional attitudes are giving way. Thus, the old economic and psychological self-sufficiency is weakening in many sections. This situation exists particularly near the cities, in areas that are most frequented by tourists, and in localities that are traversed by the major highways. Moreover, groups and group relationships among farm people are becoming less localized and less intimate in many sections. For with these widening contacts, resulting from such developments as extensive work-relief programs of the 1930's and the agricultural, welfare, and health activities now in operation on the county level, the old belief in getting along with whatever is at hand is now yielding to greater appreciation of store-bought products and higher levels of living. This trend toward the standardization of wants is accompanied by an increased desire to supplement available incomes from any and all sources.

In short, the farm people of the general and self-sufficing areas as a whole are becoming more closely related to the larger society and to industry. It seems likely that they will continue to reduce their isolation and the amount of live-at-home farming and to increase their interest in higher levels of living and greater participation in the life of the nation. The extent to which these developments will spread among the farmers, as well as the rate at which they will grow, will be determined in large part by the uses that the people make of their physical resources in agriculture, industry, and the tourist trades, and also by the attitudes that they hold toward their own traditional values regarding self-sufficiency and independence.

All Other Areas

After presenting each of the seven major type-farming areas, it is well to comment briefly on those parts of the United States that are not included in any one of the major type-farming areas already discussed. In general, they lie around the outer edges of the country — the gulf coast fringe, Florida, the southern Atlantic seaboard, Maine, the Great Lakes cutover, along the northwest Pacific coast, and in the scattered counties in the southern portions of the general and self-sufficing areas and range-livestock areas. Only the very briefest description of each section will be given here.

Perhaps the most distinctive of all sections included in this "all other areas" classification is that composed of the intensive tobacco-growing counties in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. Rural life in these counties is conditioned in numerous important ways by tobacco production. Few other agricultural enterprises, if any, require greater skill and keener personal judgment. Grade and price of tobacco may be greatly lowered if the leaves are not harvested correctly, if the curing process is not carried on properly, and if, after curing, the tobacco is not prepared and put on the market in highly specialized ways. Work rhythms in tobacco areas take on distinctive patterns in response to the critical work that must be done at exactly the right time. The most important of these, in addition to the harvesting, curing, and marketing, are: sowing the seed in well-prepared beds in late winter, transplanting the plants from the beds to the fields in early summer, proper fertilization and cultivation, and keeping off the worms and suckers. All of these season-fixed work demands of tobacco force tobacco farmers to schedule their group activities to fit in with the work rhythms of the crop. Because the year's income is received in lump-sum fashion, spending habits are not unlike those of the cotton farmers.

Along the Gulf coast fringe and in Florida the main crops are sugar cane, citrus fruits, and vegetables. In many places the winter tourist trade is of much local importance. Many of the agricultural processes in these areas, and in the truck farming sections along the Atlantic seaboard where lettuce, tomatoes, and strawberries are grown commercially, are not mechanized. This results in the influx of a great number of migrant wage workers during the peak seasons of each year, giving to these areas some of the same qualities that characterize the westernmost parts of the western specialty-crop areas. One real difference, however, is that it is not unusual in these eastern, well-watered trucking areas for small, independent, subsistence farmers to own small tracts of less fertile lands adjacent to these industrialized farming operations, and to live primarily by patch farming and fishing.

The parts of Maine included in "all other areas" are best known for their timber products and for commercial potato production, carried on with a considerable number of seasonal workers at planting time and with great numbers of seasonal workers at harvest.

The Great Lakes cutover areas are characterized by low-income, independent farming. Sawmills and dairies are the main sources of income, although in many sections trapping is also of considerable importance. This is one of the most rural portions of the country, and in many ways it exhibits a frontier character. It has little industry. The presence of the great iron-ore fields has made little impression except in the immediate localities of the mining operations. In recent years there has been some development of the tourist trade to capitalize on the numerous lakes, wooded areas, and other scenic spots.

In the Washington-Oregon Pacific coast areas, dairying is the most important agricultural enterprise, with timber operations and commercial orchards affording a good many employment opportunities for small farmers and rural nonfarm dwellers. Since 1940, in response to the war, great commercial and military activities have been carried on around Portland and in other localities.

At many places in these "all other areas" there are relatively small sections where fruit crops are produced commercially. This is especially marked in the Shenandoah Valley and other parts of the eastern highlands, and in areas in the Pacific Northwest not sufficiently extensive to be included in the western specialty-crop areas. Wherever fruit is grown commercially, there are heavy peak labor needs at harvest time, giving distinctive character to the fruit-growing localities.

The remaining areas included in the classification are a few counties in the intermountain regions, where irrigation farmers follow a general rather than a specialty-crop type of farming.

CHAPTER 27

COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS OF MAJOR TYPE-FARMING AREAS

BY ARTHUR F. RAPER

Some General Differences between Rural Life and Urban Life

The major type-farming areas of the United States, as discussed separately in the seven preceding chapters, contain many differences — in agricultural enterprises, the backgrounds of the people, sizes and types of farms, incomes, dwellings, barns, machinery, livestock, schools, churches, towns, farmers' organizations and other special-interest groups, and in the attitudes and values of the people. These differences bunch themselves broadly in response to the way rural people make a living, and so each major type-farming area tends to have a cluster of characteristics that is more or less distinctive.

But not all of rural life is characterized by differences between areas, or within areas. There are some real common denominators among farm people in contrast with those of the urban dwellers. First of all, the farm people are more nearly their own bosses and they are highly conscious of it. They don't get up or go to work by the clock, nor does a clock stop them at noon or at the end of the day. Except on plantations where dependent tenants and hired laborers work by bells, nearly all farmers determine their own working hours each day as they go along. Some tasks have to be done on schedule. Milk must be ready for the milk truck when it comes by, for example, but there are scores of other activities during the day even on a dairy farm that are done or not done wholly at the discretion of the farm family itself. By any realistic measure, around four million, or over two-thirds of all farm operators in this country are independent operators, or entrepreneurs. They determine when they will plant and harvest, where and how they will sell their farm products and buy their supplies. The activities of most families on farms in all parts of the country are more varied than in most city homes; there is much less division of labor on farms, and farm people are less dependent upon specialized services. Folk arts and skills are more evident among the people on the farms than in the cities.

The farm family, more often than the urban family, functions as an ecocomic and social unit.

The greater dependence of farmers upon the seasons and daily weather within seasons results in farm people having more pronounced rhythms of work and group activity. Since they also have more face-to-face contacts with their neighbors, more often in the rural areas than in the urban areas primary group relationships are determined by location of residence. Because farm families usually live in solitary farmsteads, rural human relations in general have a distinctive character.

The people who live by farming are much more conscious than nonfarm people of climatic changes, growing plants and animals, and the natural order in general. The most highly mechanized farmers in the areas of greatest specialization, along with all the other farmers, keep an eye out for falling weather, dry spells, fogs, and high winds. Even irrigation farmers in desert areas where moisture is more nearly man-controlled than anywhere else watch the daily reports of snowfall in the far-off high mountains from which their irrigation water comes. Along with their greater dependence upon and manipulation of natural forces, farmers are generally more conservative than others. Practically all of these generalized differences between rural life and urban life are becoming smaller, but they do exist and give to rural life a distinctive character as compared with urban life.

In the following discussion of the similarities and differences among the seven major type-farming areas, the reader should remember, as pointed out in Chapter 19, that this division of the country into major type-farming areas is but one of many possible ways of dividing rural United States into meaningful parts. We have explained our division of the country into seven major type-farming areas. Chapters 20 through 26 describe rural life in each of these major areas. Not all elements of rural life could be discussed in the space available, nor has an effort been made to include all of the varied considerations that impinge on rural life. Rather the purpose has been to deal with the central elements of rural life, particularly physical environment and technologies and values of the people as related to the manner and methods of making a living.

Population and Degree of Rurality

Comparisons between the seven major type-farming areas show marked contrasts in total population, nativity, and degree of rurality. As will be seen in Table 54, the nation's population is very unevenly distributed by major type-farming areas. In 1940 nearly a fourth of the people in the whole country lived in the dairy areas, and the second largest number lived in the cotton belt, followed closely by the general and self-sufficing areas. But a little over one-tenth of the country's population lived in the wheat areas, the range-livestock areas and the Western specialty-crop areas combined. The corn belt, with approximately one-tenth of the nation's total population, occupied a midway position in size of population, just as it occupies a midway position geographically, lying as it does between the three older, thickly settled regions to the east and the three newer, sparsely-settled regions to the west. Since 1940 there has been a further concentration of population in the industrial sections of the dairy areas, in the Western specialty-crop areas, the corn belt, and a decrease of population in the cotton belt, the general and self-sufficing areas, and in the wheat areas.

There are wide variations, too, in the elements composing the population of the major type-farming areas. For, as is observed in Table 54, the native-born white population in 1940 ranged from over 90 per cent of the total population in the corn belt and wheat areas to 68 per cent in the cotton belt. The foreign-born white population ranged from 14 per cent in the dairy areas and 11 per cent in the Western specialty-crop areas to 1 per cent in the cotton belt. The non-whites constitute 31 per cent of the population in the cotton belt, but only 2 per cent of the population in the wheat areas and 3 per cent of the population in the corn belt. The cotton belt, which had the highest percentage of non-whites and the lowest percentage of foreign-born whites, offers the most striking contrast. The system of dependent tenancy which developed after the emancipation of the slaves in the 1860's seems to have made the cotton belt less attractive to white immigrants than any of the other regions.

TABLE 54

Total Population in the United States, by Nativity, by Major Type-Farming Areas, 1940 *

Type-Farm Region	Total Population		Percentage Distribution of Population by Nativity			
	Number	Percentage	Total	Native-Born Whites	Foreign-Born Whites	Non-Whites
UNITED STATES	131,669,275	100	100	81	9	10
Corn belt	13,184,713	10	100	93	4	3
Cotton belt	20,860,110	16	100	68	1	31
Dairy areas	31,568,689	24	100	82	14	4
General and self-sufficing areas	20,201,607	15	100	89	5	6
Wheat areas	2,981,173	2	100	92	6	2
Range-livestock areas	3,758,647	3	100	88	7	5
Western specialty-crop areas	7,325,287	6	100	85	11	4
All other rural areas	17,747,742	13	100	79	8	13
Urban counties, Virginia cities & D.C.	14,041,307	11				

* Compiled from the U.S. Census

The rurality of regions differs greatly from one type-farming area to another in response to variations in soil, climate, topography, presence of non-agricultural resources, transportation and communication facilities, and history of settlement. Degree of rurality can be approximated by combining information on the proportion of the population that is rural, on the proportion of the rural population that is rural-farm, on the extent to which farm operators do off-farm work, and on the range and types of contacts rural people have with the people outside their own locality. By this process, then, the wheat areas and the cotton belt are found to be the most rural, and the dairy areas and Western specialty-crop areas the least rural. The corn belt, the range-livestock areas, and the general and self-sufficing areas occupy midway positions. The last leans toward the most rural and the first toward the least rural. The great amount of isolation in the general and self-sufficing areas slants it definitely toward the more rural in spite of the fact that, as shown in Table 55, a higher proportion of the rural population is rural-nonfarm, and that a higher proportion of the farm operators worked off their farms one hundred days or more a year than in any other major type-farming area. But the outside contacts of the people are not so great as these circumstances would suggest, for much of the off-farm work is in local sawmills, planing mills, small mining operations, and other local employment.

TABLE 55

Percentage Distribution of Population by Urban and Rural (Farm and Nonfarm) in the United States by Major Type-Farming Areas, 1940; and Percentage of Farm Operators Who Did 100 Days or More of Off-Farm Work in 1939 and in 1944 *

Type-of-Farming Region	Percentage Distribution of Population					Percentage of Farm Operators Who Did 100 Days or More Off-farm Work	
	Total	Urban	Rural				
			Total	Rural-farm	Rural-Nonfarm	1939	1944
UNITED STATES	100	57	44	23	21	16	18
Corn belt	100	46	54	31	23	10	11
Cotton belt	100	31	69	48	21	10	13
Dairy areas	100	72	28	11	17	18	22
General and self-sufficing areas	100	41	59	29	30	24	28
Wheat areas	100	31	69	42	27	9	8
Range-livestock areas	100	35	65	30	35	15	17
Western specialty-crop areas	100	65	35	13	22	22	25
All other areas	100	55	45	20	25	21	25

* Compiled from the U.S. Census

The rural-farm population was smallest (a little over one-tenth) in the dairy areas, and highest (nearly one-half) in the cotton belt. It should be noted that the rural-nonfarm population is decidedly greater than the farm population in the range-livestock areas, the dairy areas, and the Western specialty-crop areas, and slightly greater in the general and self-sufficing areas. Therefore, in thinking of the rurality of these regions, it is particularly important to be aware of both the rural-nonfarm and the rural-farm elements of the population.

Farm Incomes and Levels of Living

There is a close relationship between the general income in an area and the proportion of the total population engaged in agriculture. Per capita income is regularly lowest in places where the proportion of the total population engaged in agricultural pursuits is highest, and vice versa. Unfortunately, statistics on this particular point have not been compiled for the major type-farming areas. As indicated by data on states, however, it is clear that the lowest incomes and the highest proportions of the total population engaged in agriculture are concentrated in those states that lie most wholly in the cotton belt (Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas), and in the southern, self-dependent portions of the general and self-sufficing areas (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Missouri). The highest incomes and the lowest proportions of the population engaged in agriculture are concentrated in the states lying most wholly in the eastern portions of the dairy areas (Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Maryland and Michigan), and the west coast portions of the Western specialty-crop areas (California, Washington, and Utah).

As will be seen in Table 56, the average gross value of farm products sold, traded, and consumed by farm households in 1944 was more than five times as great per farm in the Western specialty-crop areas as in the general and self-sufficing areas and in the cotton belt. The other high income type-farming regions were, in order, the wheat area, the range-livestock area, and the corn belt. Looked at geographically and with reference to the time of settlement, it will be observed that it is the newer western regions that have the highest incomes and the older eastern ones that have the lowest. The dairy areas, the highest of any eastern type-farming region, was more than $1,300 below that of corn belt, the lowest of the four western type-farming regions.

The net income in 1944, it will be observed, was highest in the Western specialty-crop areas, followed by the wheat areas; and was smallest in the general and self-sufficing areas and next smallest in the cotton belt. The net income was more than half of the gross income in all type-farming areas except the Western specialty-crop areas, dairy areas, and the scattered sections of the country included in "all other areas."

Gross farm incomes more than doubled from 1939 to 1944 in the nation as a whole and in each of the major type-farming areas. The rank order of the type-farming areas was much the same in the two years, the only differences being that the wheat areas were a little above the range-livestock areas and the corn belt in 1944. As pointed out in Chapter 22, the wheat areas are subject to great fluctuations in income; the 1944 census recorded a year of very good yields and prices.

The percentage distribution of gross farm incomes in 1944 and 1939 show the general and self-sufficing areas and the cotton belt with the highest proportions of incomes under $600 and the corn and wheat areas with the lowest. It will be observed that in 1939, when farm incomes were less inflated than in 1944, that the percentage of farms that have average gross incomes

TABLE 56

*Gross and Net Value of Farm Products per Farm, and Percentage of Gross Farm Incomes by Size, 1944 and 1939 **

Type-Farming Areas	1944							1939					
	Av. Gross Value of Farm Products per Farm	Av. Net Value of Farm Products per Farm	Percentage Distribution of Gross Income					Av. Gross Value of Farm Products per Farm	Total	Under $600	$600 to $1,499	$1,500 to $3,999	$4,000 and over
			Total	Under $600	$600 to $1,499	$1,500 to $3,999	$4,000 and over						
UNITED STATES	$3,148	$1,700	100	24	26	29	21	$1,309	100	47	30	18	5
Corn belt	4,781	2,500	100	12	14	32	42	2,000	100	25	31	34	10
Cotton belt	1,810	1,100	100	24	38	31	7	780	100	60	31	7	2
Dairy areas	3,427	1,700	100	23	17	32	28	1,620	100	31	32	31	6
General and self-sufficing areas	1,619	900	100	40	30	22	8	760	100	65	24	9	2
Wheat areas	6,116	3,200	100	7	10	31	52	1,923	100	27	33	31	9
Range-livestock areas	4,942	2,600	100	21	19	29	31	2,175	100	42	27	20	11
Western specialty-crop areas	9,256	4,400	100	19	15	22	44	3,257	100	31	25	27	17
All other areas	2,994	1,400	100	29	25	30	16	1,273	100	49	31	15	5

* Estimated roughly by applying the ratio of realized net income from agriculture to gross income from agriculture in 1944 (July 1946, Farm Income Situation) in the principal states in each belt or region to the average gross value of farm products in 1944 shown in the preceding column.

Source: 1945 and 1940 Census of Agriculture.

over $4,000 in each major type-farming area stood in the same order as they do in the size of average income, with the proportion in the Western specialty-crop areas, being highest and that in the general and self-sufficing areas and the cotton belt lowest. But when the two intermediate income groups – $600 to $1,499 and $1,500 to $3,999 – are taken together, the corn belt ranks first with 65 per cent, the wheat areas is second with 64 per cent, the dairy areas is third with 63 per cent, and the Western specialty-crop areas is fourth with 52 per cent; the General and self-sufficing areas ranks lowest, with but 33 per cent of the gross farm incomes between $600 and $3,999.

TABLE 57

Rural-Farm Level of Living Index, and Farm Products Consumed by Farm Households

Type-Farming Region	Rural-Farm Level of Living Index*	Farm Products Consumed by Farm Households: Value per Farm		Farm Products Consumed by Farm Households: Percentage of Total Value of Farm Products	
	1940	1939	1944	1939	1944
UNITED STATES	100	$190	$326	15	10
Corn belt	123	199	333	10	7
Cotton belt	77	177	324	23	18
Dairy areas	120	206	326	13	9
General and self-sufficing areas	89	210	351	28	22
Wheat areas	118	176	340	9	6
Range-livestock	105	180	300	8	6
Western specialty-crop areas	117	120	217	4	2
All other areas	96	184	317	15	11

* There is no comparable Level of Living Index for 1945 for the whole rural-farm population, although there is an index for farm operator families only.

One of the best measures of the over-all value of farming to the farm families themselves is perhaps their level of living. The Hagood rural-farm level of living index of 1940, though it perhaps gives relatively more weight to cash farm income as compared with home consumption, is one of the best ways to measure levels of living among farm families. As the first column in Table 57 shows, the rural-farm level of living index was highest in the corn belt, followed by the dairy areas, the wheat areas, the Western specialty-crop areas, and the range-livestock areas, all five of which were above the national average of 100. Of the seven major regions, only the cotton belt, the lowest, and the general and self-sufficing areas were below the national index of 100.

It is significant that the corn belt in 1940 had the highest level of living although it did not have the highest average gross farm income, and that the cotton belt had the lowest level of living although its average gross farm income was not lowest. As was seen in an earlier table in this chapter, in 1944 and in 1939 the average gross income for the Western specialty-crop areas and of the range-livestock areas were higher than that for the corn belt, and the average gross income for the general and self-sufficing areas was a little lower than that for the cotton belt. The explanation for each of these situations lies in a combination of factors. As compared with the Western specialty and range-livestock areas, the corn belt has fewer farmers in both the lowest and in the highest income groups, more farmers in the middle-income brackets, and more of the farm family's food is produced on the farm. The lower level of living in the cotton belt than in the general and self-sufficing areas, despite its slightly higher farm income, seems to be accounted for by the cotton belt's emphasis on the production of the commercial crop of cotton, on the high incidence of low-income farm tenant families, on the production of smaller amounts of home-grown foods, and on the higher expenses involved in farm operations because of the greater use of hired workers, because more commercial fertilizer is used, and because more of the crops are produced with borrowed money on which high interest rates are paid, particularly by the nonlandowning families. Though the average gross farm income of the cotton farmers was a little above that of the farmers in the general and self-sufficing areas, the rural-farm level of living index in 1940 was considerably lower in the cotton belt, where it was 77 as compared with 89 in the general and self-sufficing areas.

Three other considerations enter dynamically into the farm family's level of living in all the major type-farming areas. First, there is the amount of farm products consumed by the farm household. Second, there is the amount of supplemental earning secured by the farm operator from off-farm work. And third there is the extent to which the farm family itself makes a work contribution to the farm operations. A high home consumption of farm products is associated with a higher level of living index than the average gross farm income would suggest, and vice versa. As may be seen in Table 57, the lowest value in 1944 and in 1939 was in the Western specialty-crop areas which had the highest gross farm income, and the highest was in the general and self-sufficing areas which had the lowest average gross farm income. But the close relation between a high value of home-consumed products in low income type-farming areas, and vice versa, goes no further. In 1944 the next highest value of home-consumed farm products was in the wheat areas, which had a high income, while in 1939 it was in the high-income dairy areas and the corn belt rather than in the cotton belt which had next to the lowest average farm income of any region in 1944 and 1939.

The home-consumption of farm products is a widespread device by which independent farm families effectively raise their level of living. The lower the gross income of the family, the greater the incentive to increase the consumption of home-grown foods. Low-income migrant farm workers — especially sharecroppers, highly mobile and dependent tenants — secure their living supplies through a plantation commissary or a time-merchant arrangement. They have, therefore, much less opportunity than the small owner-operator partially to compensate for low gross incomes by increased home production of food. In view of the marked tendency for independent low-income farm families to consume relatively higher proportions of their farm products, it is not surprising that the actual value of the home-consumed farm products is rather constant in value from one major type-farming area to another (the smallest in 1944 and in 1939 was nearly three-fifths of the largest). There is no such uniformity in gross farm income, values of farm buildings, farm lands, machinery, or the incidence of such household conveniences as electricity, refrigeration, running water, or telephone.

Small farmers also supplement their farm incomes by doing off-farm work. The work enables them to maintain a higher level of living. As shown in Table 55 of this chapter, such employment is most common in the general and self-sufficing areas which have many small, generally unproductive hillside farms, where farmers rely upon off-farm work as the best available means to supplement low farm incomes. The next highest proportions of farmers doing one hundred days off-farm work in 1944 and in 1939 were in the Western specialty-crop areas and dairy areas where many families farm on a part-time basis and also work in near-by industries. The smallest proportions were in the wheat areas and the corn belt, where farming operations are usually large and most highly mechanized, and in the cotton belt, where little off-season farm work and relatively little industrial employment is available. The percentage of farm operators doing one hundred days off-farm work increased during the half-decade in all type-farming areas except the wheat areas.

The rural-farm levels of living in the major type-farming regions are also influenced by whether farm work is done by the farm family or by croppers and hired workers. In the areas where most farm work is done by the farm operators and their families – as in the corn belt, dairy areas, and general and self-sufficing areas – the farm levels of living are relatively higher than gross farm incomes indicate, whereas it is lower in the areas where much of the work is done by croppers and farm wage workers, as in the cotton belt and the Western specialty-crop areas. When farm operators do most of their own work, they themselves collect the economic returns and thus apply their labor directly to their own levels of living. Work of croppers and farm wage workers makes an economic contribution to the levels of living of the plantation owners and employers as well as to their own levels of living. In the cotton belt and in the Western specialty-crop areas, for instance, there are much greater socio-economic differences among the farm people than in either the corn belt, dairy areas, or the general and self-sufficing areas, where levels of living are relatively higher than average gross farm incomes. The evidence seems to indicate that the pulling down of the farm level of living by a high percentage of low-income families may not nearly be compensated for by the high incomes of a relatively small number of farm families.

Farm Tenure and Hired Farm Workers

As may be seen in Table 58, farm tenancy rates range from 14 per cent in the Western specialty-crop areas and 16 per cent in the dairy areas to 53 per cent in the cotton belt and 38 per cent in the corn belt. Croppers are common only in the cotton belt. The data presented in this table have most meaning when seen against two background considerations: first, that farm tenant families in some areas have a socio-economic status approximating that of landowning farm families, while in other areas practically all farm tenant families occupy a low status; and, second, that farm operators in some areas put much greater value on doing their own farm work than do farm operators in other areas. These differences in the status of tenants in the various type-farming areas are significant because they add important meaning to the tenancy rates themselves. In the corn belt and wheat areas, for instance, the status of tenant farmers is high, so many more families will be tenants by choice than in the cotton belt where tenant families have a generally low status. So, from the standpoint of tenancy as a submerged agricultural group, the rate of tenancy as recorded by statistics is effectively lower in the corn belt than in the cotton belt. On the other hand, as shown in the chapters above, the farm operators in most of the best farming sections of the country rent a larger proportion of the total farm acreage than is rented in the high-tenancy cotton belt, and the per cent of equity held by the farmers in the farms they operate is generally lower in the best farming areas than anywhere else in the country. This low equity (it is under 30 per cent in most of the prosperous western parts of the corn belt and the eastern wheat areas) is accounted for by the fact that both the mortgaged indebtedness of owner-operators and the farm tenancy rates are high. Thus it is that while the proportion of farms operated by tenants is highest in the cotton belt, the proportion of land operated by non-owners is highest in the wheat areas, and also in the corn belt where the equity of all farmers in the farms they operate is lowest in the country. It should also be pointed out that though the percentage of farms operated by tenants is very low in the Western specialty-crop areas, the many large grower-shipper operators there who rely on hired workers and lease most of the land they use make the effective proportion of farm owner-operatorship much less high than the statistics on tenure of farm operators suggest.

TABLE 58

Percentage Distribution of Farm Operators by Tenure in 1945 *

Type-farming Region	Percentage Distribution of Farm Operators by Tenure			
	Total	Owners	Tenants (including croppers)	Croppers only
UNITED STATES	100	68	32	7
Corn belt	100	62	38	—†
Cotton belt	100	47	53	21
Dairy areas	100	84	16	—†
General and self-sufficing areas	100	82	18	3
Wheat areas	100	69	31	—†
Range-livestock areas	100	77	23	1
Western specialty-crop areas	100	86	14	—†
All other areas	100	79	21	6

* Data compiled from U.S. Census.

† Less than one-half of 1 per cent.

The proportion of farmers who hire workers varies widely from one type-farming area to another. As shown in Table 59, the percentage of farms in 1945 reporting the use of hired workers ranged from 37 per cent in the general and self-sufficing areas, with an average of 116 days of work during the year on farms reporting, to 72 per cent of farms in the Western specialty-crop areas, with an average of 401 man-days of hired labor per farm reporting. The range-livestock areas had second to the most hired labor as shown when per cent of farms using hired laborers and average man-days per year worked by them are taken together. Next in order were the wheat areas, dairy areas, and cotton belt. The corn belt was second to the lowest of the seven major type-farming areas in use of hired farm workers. The data in Table 60 showing the average number of hired workers per farm during the week of September 16–22, 1945, parallel rather closely the 1945 annual figures; hired workers were the least prevalent in the general and self-sufficing areas and in the corn belt, and most prevalent in the Western specialty-crop areas, with the cotton belt holding second place during this week.

TABLE 59

Farm Work Done by Hired Workers in 1945 *

Type-Farming Regions	Per cent of all Farms Reporting some Hired Labor in 1945	Average Man-days of Hired Labor per Farms Reporting Hired Labor in 1945
United States	47	182
Corn belt	45	125
Cotton belt	47	170
Dairy areas	42	252
General and self-sufficing areas	37	116
Wheat areas	64	158
Range-livestock areas	52	238
Western specialty-crop areas	72	401
All other areas	52	192

* Estimates based on data from enumerative surveys of the Bur. of Agr. Economics.

The average total number of workers per farm (operators, unpaid family workers, and hired workers combined) during the week of September 16–22, as seen in Table 60, was more than twice as great for the Western specialty-crop areas and the cotton belt as for the general and self-sufficing areas. Only in the corn belt and the general and self-sufficing areas did the operators themselves account for more than half of all workers, only in the cotton belt were the number of unpaid family workers greater than operators or hired workers, and only in the Western specialty-crop areas was more than half of the total farm labor force made up of hired workers. Although the corn belt was second to the lowest in average number of all farm workers during the week, it had the smallest use of unpaid family workers, and as noted above next to the smallest use of hired workers. The greatest numbers of unpaid family workers were in the cotton belt.

The average number of hours worked during the week by operators was highest in the dairy and wheat areas, and lowest in the general and self-sufficing areas and the cotton belt. The number of hours worked by hired workers were a little less than for operators in all regions except the Western specialty-crop areas and the general and self-sufficing areas. In similar surveys for a week in March and a week in May, 1945, hired workers in the cotton belt put in more hours each week than did the operators. The cash wages of hired farm workers in the Western specialty-crop areas, wheat areas, and corn belt were more than double what they were in the cotton belt and in the general and self-sufficing areas.

Broadly speaking, farmers in the dairy areas, corn belt, and wheat areas use hired workers only for the work which they and their families do not have the time and strength to do. In the cotton belt and the Western specialty-crop areas, on the other hand, many of the larger operators think of themselves primarily as employers and managers rather than as workers, and so hire labor or use croppers for much of the farm work. In the cotton belt, even small landowners not uncommonly hire labor when they themselves are far from fully employed. Therefore, in comparing the type-farming areas with respect to the percentage of farm operators who hire labor the facts must be seen in relation to traditional attitudes toward work as well as in relation to the amount of farm work that there is to be done.

TABLE 60

Farm Work Done by Operators, Unpaid Family Workers, and Hired Workers during the Week of September 16–22, 1945 *

Type-farming Regions	Average Number of Workers per Farm during Week of Sept. 16–22, 1945				Average Hours Worked during Week of September 16–22, 1945		Average Hourly Cash Wage during Week of Sept. 16–22 on Reporting Farms
	Total	Operators	Unpaid Family Members Who Work 15 Hours and Over	Hired Workers	Operators	Hired Workers	
UNITED STATES	2.1	.8	.7	.6	43	41	$.48
Corn belt	1.5	.9	.3	.3	57	43	.65
Cotton belt	2.7	.8	1.1	.8	35	34	.31
Dairy areas	1.6	.8	.4	.4	59	53	.35
General and self-sufficing areas	1.3	.7	.4	.2	31	40	.31
Wheat areas	2.0	1.0	.6	.4	59	52	.69
Range-livestock areas	1.9	.9	.4	.6	53	48	.51
Western specialty-crop areas	3.1	.8	.4	1.9	48	52	.76
All other areas	2.0	.8	.5	.7	39	56	.55

* Estimates based on data from enumerative surveys of the Bur. of Agr. Economics.

The proportion of the work that is done on farms by the farm families themselves varies. In the general and self-sufficing areas practically all the work is done by the farm families and it is done largely by hand and with simple tools. In contrast, in the Western specialty-crop areas machines and great numbers of hired laborers are used. While in the wheat areas, corn belt, and dairy areas much of the work is done with machines by the farm family, with extra farm wage workers used on the larger farms during peak work periods.

The families of the larger farm operators work together as close-knit work units most often in the dairy areas, the corn belt, the wheat areas, and the general and self-sufficing areas. In the range-livestock areas, range work is commonly thought of as a man's province, although it is not unusual for a rancher's wife to be quite familiar with the whole operation and to be able when necessary to manage the ranch. Farm children in the dairy, in the general and self-sufficing areas, and in the corn belt begin early to do meaningful work. In the wheat areas and range-livestock areas young children usually can only do house chores, but at the age of 16 or 18 they are familiar with most operations and often do a man's work.

The amount of manual labor done by farm families in the Western specialty-crop areas, the cotton belt, and the southern portions of the range-livestock areas is determined largely by the socio-economic status of the family in the particular locality. The members of the families of the larger operators in these type-farming areas do not work together much in farming activities. The husband functions largely as financial agent and manager, and his wife and children seldom do any work in the fields or around barns or packing sheds. On the other hand, the families of the lowest income groups usually work together in the fields as family units, with the women and the children often working along with the men. This is especially marked among the wage workers and croppers in the cotton belt, among the seasonal wage workers on the West coast, and in other parts of the country where they are used.

Work Rhythms of Farm People

It is common knowledge that the work rhythms of farm people vary greatly from one major type-farming area to another. Unfortunately, no specific data on this particular point have been compiled for the type-farming areas as a whole. Table 61, however, makes clear in a general way some of the differences. The distribution of all farm work is more regular throughout the year in the three corn belt states than in the nation as a whole, while in the eight cotton belt states and the spring wheat state the work is much less

TABLE 61

*Monthly Percentage Distribution of Labor Required for All Farm Work in the United States and in Selected Groups of States **

Geographic Areas	Percentage Distribution of Labor											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
All Farm Work in the United States	6	6	7	9	10	10	9	8	11	11	7	6
3 Corn states (1)	6	6	8	9	10	10	10	8	9	9	8	7
8 Cotton states (2)	5	6	8	10	11	10	7	6	13	13	7	4
1 Spring wheat state (3)	5	4	6	11	10	7	8	15	14	9	6	5

* Data compiled from a BAE publication, FM 59, Farm Labor Requirements in the United States, 1939 and 1944.

(1) Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana.
(2) South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas.
(3) North Dakota.

regular. In the corn belt states, the work during the month in which there was least to do was three-fifths of that of the busiest month, whereas in the cotton belt states it was but one-third, and in the wheat areas states, but one-fourth.

In looking at these figures, however, one must remember that the work rhythms would be much more pronounced if data were available for smaller geographic units than states, or for only the farmers in the state who are generally typical of the type-farming area under consideration. Table 62 readily shows how great the differences would be in labor requirements from month to month if, for example, only corn, wheat, cotton, or hay were grown. Note that in six months of each year 80 per cent of the year's work is done for corn, 82 per cent for cotton, 89 per cent for wheat, and 95 per cent for hay. The labor required for livestock, whether chickens, hogs, milk cows, or even other cattle, is distributed much more evenly throughout the year. Note, too, that the busiest months in livestock farming are in winter, when there is least work in crops. These basic facts are especially significant to the work rhythms in type-farming areas, for they show clearly how it is that the greatest monthly regularity of farm work occurs in dairy and general farming, such as are practiced in the dairy and general and self-sufficing areas, or in farming that combines crops and livestock, as in the corn belt, and how it is that the greatest irregularity in work rhythms occurs where commercial crop farming is done and there is relatively little livestock and general farming, as is the case in many parts of the cotton belt and the wheat areas.

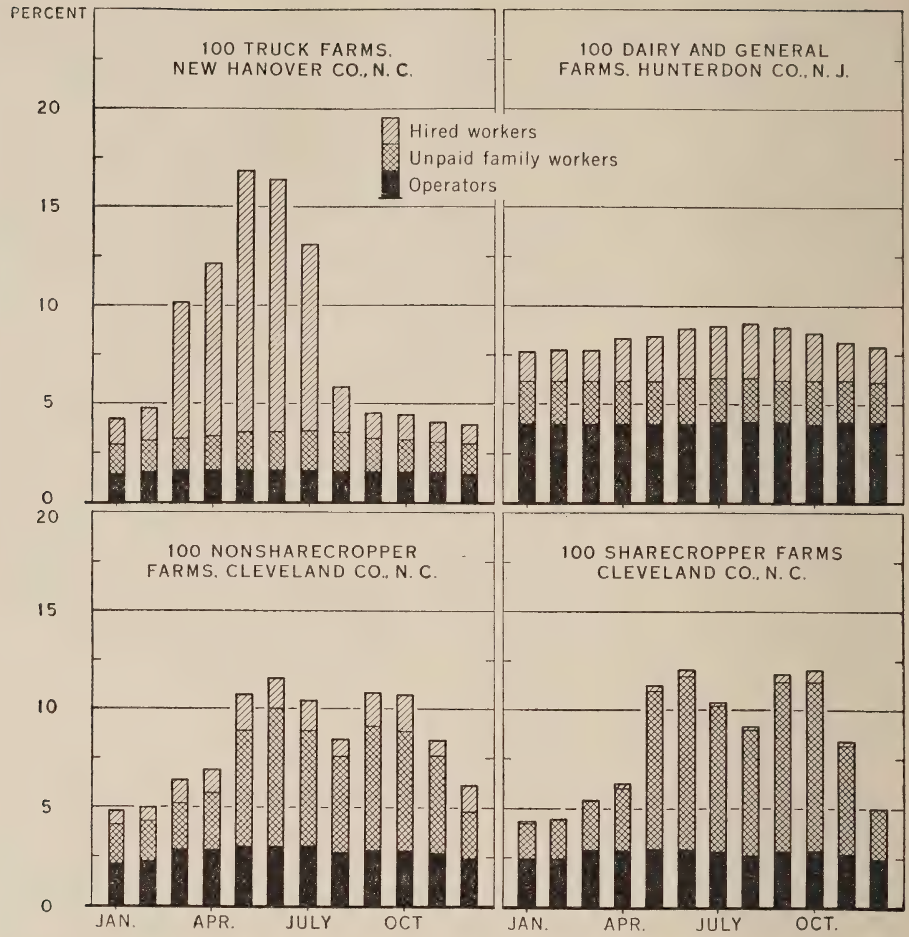
TABLE 62

Monthly Percentage Distribution of Labor Required for All Farm Work in the United States for Specified Crop and Livestock Enterprises, 1944 *

Selected Crop and Livestock Enterprises	Percentage Distribution of Labor											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Crops												
Corn	2	3	7	13	19	14	4	1	11	13	10	3
Cotton	2	2	3	7	10	13	5	4	24	21	7	2
Wheat	†	†	1	5	4	8	20	25	22	20	6	1
Hay (Alfalfa, Clover, Timothy)	†	†	2	4	6	27	34	16	8	2	1	†
Livestock												
Chickens	8	8	10	10	9	9	8	7	7	8	8	8
Hogs	9	9	10	9	8	7	7	7	8	9	8	9
Milk cows	10	9	10	9	8	7	7	7	7	8	9	9
Other cattle	15	13	14	10	4	3	2	3	4	7	10	15

* Data compiled from a BAE publication, FM 59, Farm Labor Requirements in the United States, 1939 and 1944.
† Less than 0.5 percent.

Farmers can have leisure as a result of highly fluctuating work rhythms, such as occur in the wheat areas, the cotton belt, and the Western specialty-crop areas; or as a result of having a moderate amount of work to do throughout the year, as is the situation in much of the general and self-sufficing areas. But dairy farmers and poultry farmers are busy daily throughout the year, while most corn belt farmers with their hog, poultry, or beef



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Fig. 48 PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL AMOUNTS OF LABOR (FARM OPERATORS, UNPAID FAMILY WORKERS, AND HIRED FARM LABORERS) USED MONTHLY IN FOUR TYPES OF FARMING, 1935

cattle enterprises are also on the job and generally busy the whole year round. Most farmers have the major part of their leisure in the winter months, although some dairymen and poultrymen who buy most of their feed, as well as ranchers who make a practice of carrying large numbers of cattle or sheep through the winter, are busiest in that season.

In addition to the amount and the time of year in which farm work is done, there is the important matter of the distribution of the farm work between operators, family workers, and hired laborers. By way of illustration, the graphs[1] show how varied the farm work requirements were in 1935 in three counties representing three type-farming situations, and how these requirements were met. In the dairy and general farming county, where the work load remained generally constant except for a slight rise in summer, the farm operators were equally busy throughout the year and did a little over half of all the work. The remainder was about equally divided between family workers, who remained almost constant, and hired laborers, who were almost twice as numerous in summer as in winter. In the cotton county the majority of the workers on cropper-operated farms were family workers. And the great importance of family labor in this area is shown by the fact that but roughly one-fourth of the workers were croppers, and that, except for a few hired laborers, all the rest were unpaid family workers. The distribution of labor on the non-cropper farms in this same county was generally the same, although the operators and hired laborers were relatively more important and family workers were less important. In the truck county the use of hired labor was high from March through July, rising to a very high peak in late May and early June. Family labor in this area, unlike that in the cotton county, increased but little during the busy season. Moreover, dairy and cotton farms were largely family-operated, whereas truck farms were highly dependent on hired workers.

---

[1] See graphs (Fig. 48).

Land and Buildings, Implements and Machinery, and Livestock

Still other important comparisons to be made among the type-farming areas are those involving the value of land and farm buildings per farm, the amount of machinery and equipment, and the value of livestock. But since the data on the average values of lands and buildings, implements and machinery, and livestock for each major type-farming area have not been compiled by counties, as were the data in Tables 54–58, the averages presented here are states predominantly in one or another of the major type-farming areas. And, as may be seen in Table 63, thirty-one states are used. The seventeen that are more or less evenly divided between two or more type-farming areas are not included.

The average value of land and buildings per farm, ranges thus from over $20,000 in the states predominantly in the Western specialty-crop areas, to under $5,000 in the states in the general and self-sufficing areas and in the cotton belt. The value in the states in the corn belt and in wheat areas is roughly three times that in two lowest groups of states. The value of land and buildings is generally low in the states in the dairy areas because of the numerous small, part-time farms near industrial centers. It is low also in the range-livestock areas because much of the range is publicly owned, and since many cattle and sheep are moved out of the area each year after grazing, only a few farm buildings are needed. There is a marked pattern of higher values in the newer type-farming regions in the West, where large-scale farming operations are common as compared with the older areas in the East, where farming operations are generally smaller.

The average value per farm of implements and machinery is also highest in the states in the Western specialty-crop areas, which are followed closely by the wheat areas and then by the corn belt, the dairy areas, and the range-livestock areas. The cotton belt and the general and self-sufficing areas are in a class by themselves, for the value in these is less than half of the lowest value obtaining in the other five groups of states.

The percentage of farms with tractors was highest (71 per cent) in the wheat areas states; here horses are looked upon as luxuries on many farms. The next highest percentages were in the corn belt, the dairy areas, and the range-livestock states. In the Western specialty-crop areas the percentage of farms with tractors was but slightly above the national average despite the fact that the value of farm machinery per farm is higher here than anywhere else. The explanation lies in the distribution of the ownership of farm machinery. For while the largest farming operations are mechanized as fully as possible, there are numerous small irrigation farms without tractors, although on many of these some tractor work is done on a custom basis. Moreover, on some of the larger farms much or all of the tractor work may be hired from local concerns that specialize in breaking land, in preparing it for planting, and in cultivating crops. Farm tractors were least common in the cotton belt, where only a sixth of the farms had them. But, as in each of the other type-farming areas, there are great differences also within the cotton belt. In the plains sections of Texas and Oklahoma, for instance, approximately a third of the farmers have tractors, while in most of the older, southeastern parts of the belt there are tractors on but about 6 per cent of the farms. The general and self-sufficing areas have the

TABLE 63

*Average Value per Farm of Land and Buildings, Implements and Machinery, and of Livestock for the United States and for Selected States Predominantly in Each of Seven Major Type-Farming Areas, 1945 **

Geographic Divisions	Average Value of Land and Buildings	Implements and Machines		Average Value of Live-stock	Av. Value of Land & Bldg., Imp. & Mach. & Livestock
		Average Value	Percentage of Farmers Having Tractors		
UNITED STATES	$ 7,916	$1,094	34	$1,446	$10,456
3 Corn belt states (1)	15,392	1,710	63	2,332	19,434
8 Cotton belt states (2)	4,669	604	16	865	6,138
6 Dairy areas states (3)	7,444	1,571	53	1,939	10,954
5 General and self-sufficing areas states (4)	4,485	627	17	800	5,912
2 Wheat areas states (5)	12,717	1,920	71	2,265	16,902
4 Range-livestock areas states (6)	12,740	1,563	45	4,044	18,347
3 Western specialty-crop areas states (7)	20,508	1,980	39	2,266	24,754

* Data compiled from the U.S. Census.

(1) Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa; (2) South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas; (3) Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Michigan and Wisconsin; (4) Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania; (5) Kansas and North Dakota; (6) Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada; (7) California, Utah, and Idaho

next fewest tractors. Most of them are on larger farms in the scattered commercial farming areas and in the larger valleys.

The value of livestock per farm varies from $800 and a little over in the states in the general and self-sufficing areas and in the cotton belt to over $4,000 in the states in the range-livestock areas. The corn belt, with its hog and cattle feeding enterprises, is second highest, and it is followed by the Western specialty-crop areas, the wheat areas, and the dairy areas. The lowness of the average figure in the dairy areas is accounted for by the presence there of a great number of part-time farms, poultry farms, orchards, and other non-dairy farms.

Over-all differences in the size of farming operations in the states of the major type-farming areas are indicated when values of land and buildings, machinery and equipment, are combined with livestock. When all three are high — as they are in the corn belt, the wheat areas, the Western specialty-crop areas, and the range-livestock areas — farming operations are generally large, and average gross farm incomes are high. When all three are low, moreover, as in the cotton belt and general and self-sufficing areas, farm operations are small and farm incomes are low. As was shown earlier in this chapter, however, rural-farm levels of living are not necessarily highest where the average gross farm incomes are highest, or lowest when gross incomes are lowest. So it is too with value of land and buildings, implements and machinery, and livestock.

Other factors that dynamically affect rural life in general, including the rural-farm level of living, are the age and stability of settlement as reflected in the prevalence of permanent and substantial farm buildings, and the reliance farmers put upon science and co-operative effort. For with any given amount of money and any given value of land, machinery, and livestock, it is easier to maintain a high level of living in the older, settled, stable areas, where farm buildings are most permanent and substantial. This factor is of some advantage to the older, eastern type-farming areas as contrasted with the areas west of the corn belt which were settled later. All the matters discussed thus far in this chapter, plus numerous others to be taken up below, have important influences upon the social and institutional life of the rural people of the nation.

Group Life and Organization

Group life in rural sections tends to take its character largely from the distinctive farming operations of the area. In other words, the most common group activities are directly influenced by the way farm products are produced and marketed, the means by which the farm work is done and by whom, and the basic work rhythms of the people. In some type-farming areas there is need for continuous work and concerted action among the farm families of a locality; in others there is not. Dairy farmers have long worked together to market their highly perishable products and to buy their supplies. There are also close relationships among farmers in the Western specialty-crop areas for such specific purposes as the use of irrigation water and the production of large quantities of uniform products for shipment to distant markets. By way of contrast, in the general and self-sufficing areas and in the cotton belt farm activities give little occasion for close associations. Farmers in the corn belt, the wheat areas, and the range-livestock areas occupy a position generally midway between extremes. There a considerable amount of group association occurs in connection with selling farm products, buying supplies, and keeping up with the best ways of carrying on farming operations.

Formal organizations, that is, an organized group with officers, at least a general program, and more or less regular meetings, are most pronounced in the dairy areas, the corn belt, and the Western specialty-crop areas. They are next most common in the wheat areas and the range-livestock areas, and least common in the cotton belt and in the general and self-sufficing areas. Participation in the major farmers' organizations takes on a definite type-farming pattern. The Farm Bureau is strongest in the corn belt, the Farmers Union is strongest in the wheat areas, and the Grange is most prevalent in the dairy sections of the northern and eastern parts of the United States and in the northern Pacific Coast areas, where in recent years dairying has become the main farm enterprise. Participation of farmers in co-operative and marketing associations in the type-farming areas stands roughly in this order: dairy areas, corn belt, wheat areas, Western specialty-crop areas, range-livestock areas, and last of all the cotton belt and the general and self-sufficing areas.

Activities of rural people in schools and churches are nearly everywhere affected by the major type of farming in the region. The most pronounced expressions of such influence occur in the wheat and range-livestock areas, where the population is sparse and maintenance of schools and churches difficult; and in the cotton belt, where many of the rural schools for Negroes and some of those for whites have short sessions in summer in order to facilitate cotton-picking by the children in the fall, where rural church activities are most common in the late-summer, slack work period, when the annual revival is usually held. In all type-farming areas, school and church programs are scheduled for the time of year when work is not pressing and the weather reasonably satisfactory.

Much more formal activity centers around schools and churches in some parts of the country than in others. In the dairy areas, for instance, there is a continuous round of activities for adults and youth in the schools and churches, most of which are located in the towns, where milk is shipped or processed and farm supplies regularly bought. Consolidated schools serving rural people are common focal points for farmers' organizations of all kinds, and for the activities of the Future Farmers of America and the 4-H Clubs, particularly in open-country and smaller towns in the cotton belt, the general and self-sufficing areas, and in some parts of the corn belt. Most of the high schools in the wheat areas, range-livestock areas, and the Western specialty-crop areas are located in the trading centers, especially in the county-seat towns and the other, larger towns. Although little or no organized activity is carried on at the small rural schools in most parts of the country, in some of the more isolated sections of the general and self-sufficing areas these school-houses serve as meeting places for the only organized activities in the locality, including Sunday School and an occasional preaching service. Small district schools are so numerous in the central and western parts of the corn belt that the area constitutes one of the major one-teacher school belts of the nation. The next highest concentration of one-teacher schools is in the cotton belt, where not all rural white schools and but few rural Negro schools have been consolidated. Because of the lack of schoolhouses, many of the small rural Negro schools in some of the old plantation sections are conducted in Negro churches and lodge halls.

The maintenance of open-country schools and churches has been an especially great problem in the wheat areas and the range-livestock areas. In the early settlement of the wheat areas, people attempted to make a living on smaller acreages than were practical in an area of low rainfall. As the farming population has decreased, the number of churches and schools declined. In recent years there has been a pronounced tendency to move schools and churches to the trading centers. In both the range-livestock areas and the wheat areas many rural families move into the towns each year so that their children may go to school there.

Open-country churches are common throughout the cotton belt, the general and self-sufficing areas and the corn belt. These are generally small and often in decline as measured by membership and organized activity. But even so, along with schools they are the most important centers of organized rural life in most of these areas. Numerous rural churches have been abandoned, particularly in the corn belt and the western parts of the cotton belt where mechanized commercial farming has reduced the number of farmers and shifted some of their memberships – along with many of their business and social activities – away from the smaller towns to the larger ones. An exodus of erstwhile Negro tenants from some of the old plantation areas in the central and eastern parts of the cotton belt has resulted in the decline of rural Negro churches. There are practically no strong open-country churches in the range-livestock areas or the Western specialty-crop areas. Rural families in these regions commonly take little active interest in the town churches. In fact, throughout both of these newer type-farming areas in the West, as well as in the wheat areas, the corn belt, and the dairy areas, nearly all of the few open-country churches that are strong in membership and activity are in localities where there are cohesive nationality and religious groups, such as Norwegian or Swedish Lutherans, Mennonites, or Catholics. Rural Mormons of Utah and Idaho are also usually active in their churches, nearly always located in the villages and towns.

The informal activities of rural people are influenced by daily, weekly, and seasonal work schedules, proximity of other families, proportion of farmers, the extent of mechanization, diversity of socio-economic groupings, types of farm organizations, and school and church activities. All these conditions differ broadly from one major type-farming area to another. The greatest amount of informal activity occurs in the general and self-sufficing areas, among the non-landowning whites and the Negroes of the cotton belt, and among the hired farm workers wherever they are used in great numbers, as they are in the cotton belt, the Western specialty-crop areas, the southern parts of the range-livestock areas, and the trucking sections along the Gulf Coast and Atlantic seaboard.

Broadly speaking, the greater the amount of formal organization in a locality the smaller the amount of informal organization, and vice versa. Informal co-operation in the form of neighborly mutual aid is most prevalent among the lower-income owner-operator families in the hilly sections of the general and self-sufficing areas and among tenants and croppers, by race, in the cotton belt. Informal social relations also follow closely along socio-economic lines in the Western specialty-crop areas. In the corn belt much informal association is carried on with families who live within the school district, and with kinsmen and friends much farther away. In the wheat and range-livestock areas much visiting is done on a locality basis. Although farm families are far apart in the open country, they maintain close relationships with one another. The more wealthy and sophisticated elements of the population in the range-livestock areas have very wide economic and social contacts. Visiting in family groups is most common in the wheat areas, the range-livestock areas, and the general and self-sufficing areas, and least common in the populous, urban-dominated Western specialty-crop and dairy areas.

The County, the Township, the Community, and Town-Country Relationships

From one major type-farming area to another there are also marked differences in the importance of the county and of the township. The importance of the county in the life of the people is roughly indicated by the prominence of the courthouse, which in the cotton belt is usually in the middle of a full city block in the center of the county-seat town and is the largest building in many rural counties. The courthouse is only slightly less prominent in the general and self-sufficing areas, and in most parts of the corn belt and the wheat areas. The county is of least meaning in the every-day living of rural people in the newer, western areas, and especially in New England. In most parts of the cotton belt and in many sections of the general and self-sufficing areas, "court week" is a semi-annual holiday period of a few days for many rural people. In the cotton belt the county from the outset has been of especial importance. County officials there have occupied a strategic position in maintaining the traditional race and class structure which developed around the production of cotton by plantation farming. The difference between the role of the county in the cotton belt as compared with its role in the corn belt, where the people have always done most of their own work and have maintained an open electorate, is indicated by the fact that prosperous corn belt farmers are seldom willing to offer themselves for county offices, whereas leading plantation families in the cotton belt have usually been well represented among the county officials.

The township is of greatest importance as a formal organization in New

England, where the town form of government with its town-hall meeting has been dominant since colonial times. The township was an important unit of organized rural life also during the early settlement period throughout the whole of the territory now included in the dairy areas, the corn belt, the eastern portions of the wheat areas, and some of the northern portions of the general and self-sufficing areas. And although most of the township's earliest functions, such as road maintenance and bridge construction, and in some areas the care of the indigent poor, have been shifted to the county and in many instances later to the state, the township as a unit of rural life remains quite distinct in many parts of these areas. Except in New England, however, the boundaries of today's rural communities do not usually parallel township lines, although rural consolidation of schools has in some areas been based on the township as a unit. This is especially marked in the central and western parts of the corn belt, where, as was indicated earlier, because of the great value the people put upon maintaining their traditional locality groupings, only a limited amount of rural school consolidation has occurred.

The community and neighborhood patterns of rural life differ markedly, too, in the various major type-farming areas. Rural communities in general center around trading centers; neighborhoods, around open-country schools and churches. In New England, as we have said, the town (township) as a political unit has been a major unifying factor since colonial times, and community lines now often correspond closely with town lines. Thus the New England town-hall village has stabilized the town (township) as a community. Townships elsewhere are most likely to approximate communities in localities where there is one rural village in each township.

But in many parts of the country, especially in the wheat and range-livestock areas, and in the less populous portions of the others (outside of New England), because the trading centers are far apart and many of the smaller ones are in decline, rural community boundaries have not been stabilized. Even so, however, despite their more frequent trips to the larger towns for expert machinery repairing, medical services, and types of amusement and recreation that are not available in the smaller nearby towns, there is a distinct tendency, especially in the corn belt and the wheat areas, for the smaller towns to remain the effective local social centers of farm people.

In the cotton belt there is a distinct bi-racial pattern in white and Negro communities and neighborhoods. Around the trading centers the community boundaries of the two racial groups often approximate each other, but in the open country the neighborhood boundaries are almost never parallel. Rather, the center of the one tends to be on the fringes of the other. Moreover, the open-country schools and churches of the whites and of the Negroes are seldom at the same place, for the whites in each neighborhood expect the Negroes to have their churches and schools on the fringes of the white church-and-school-centered neighborhoods.

The roles of towns differ in the type-farming areas in response to the major types of farm enterprises with their differing work rhythms, tenure systems, socio-economic groupings, and methods of marketing farm products and of securing farm supplies. In nearly all parts of the country rural people go into town each week at some particular time, usually Saturday, known locally as "farmers' day," "farmers' afternoon," or "farmers' evening." In some portions of the general and self-sufficing areas there are two farmers' days each week. In the cotton belt, especially in the old slave plantation areas, towns are crowded all Saturday afternoon, even in the busiest seasons. In the wheat areas and the corn belt, on the other hand, the crowds in towns on "farmers' day" during the busy season are smaller, people stay a shorter time, and in the very busiest seasons they usually delay coming to town until the late evening when field work can no longer be done.

Even the appearance of most towns take its character largely from the dominant type of farming in the area. Thus, cotton warehouses, grain elevators, livestock yards, fruit or vegetable packing sheds, cheese factories, creameries, milk shipping stations, slaughtering houses, and cold storage plants are, as suggested by their names, concentrated in the type-farming area that produces a particular product. Furthermore, farm machinery sales offices are more prominent in the corn belt towns than in those of the general and self-sufficing area; fertilizer dealers are more evident in towns in the cotton belt than in those in the wheat areas; farm labor contractors are more prevalent in the Western specialty-crop areas than in the dairy areas and so on.

The seasonal round of town attractions that are of special interest to rural people occur more or less evenly throughout the year in areas where dairy, poultry, part-time, and general farming provide a steady income; but they are highly seasonal where incomes are received in annual lump-sums, as they are in the production of cotton, wheat, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, and lambs. In these latter areas, then, county fairs, carnivals, homecoming celebrations, and the like are nearly always scheduled to take place just after the year's income has been received. Certainly from the farmer's point of view this is the natural time of the year to celebrate, for the years' work is done and there is money in pocket with which to have a good time. And the town merchants of course fit their activities to these seasonal variations in income.

The type of farming in a locality is also one of the major factors affecting town-country relationships, the range and quality of professional and other expert services available to rural people in the towns, and the likelihood of farm people and townspeople belonging to the same civic organizations and the same churches and of their voting the same way in local and national elections. For instance, many of the largest farm operators in the Western specialty-crop areas and in the range-livestock areas, who are not infrequently absentee owners themselves, are closely identified with the leading urban businessmen of these areas and of places beyond them; the more successful farmers in the wheat areas and the corn belt feel perfectly at home with the people in the larger county-seat towns where they have their own cooperative enterprises; and dairy farmers, busy as they are with twice-daily chores, are literally part and parcel of the nearby towns where they regularly sell their milk and buy their supplies. In the general and self-sufficing areas, where commercial farming is least important and gross farm cash incomes are lowest, the rural dweller is least likely to be a member of a town church or of the county civic club, which is usually made up largely of townspeople. On the other hand in the cotton belt, where the average gross income is nearly as low, the largest planters are commonly active in all county-wide economic, civic, and social groups and may frequently be leading members of the largest town churches; while the lower-income rural whites and Negroes have their own separate churches in the open country and have few relationships with the townspeople other than as sellers of farm products and as buyers of supplies.

The range and type of special interest groups, too, are most widespread and diversified in the same major type-farming areas where formal group organizations are most pronounced, and vice versa. Thus, such special interest farm groups as crop and livestock associations are most numerous and have the widest membership in the dairy areas, the corn belt, the wheat areas, the Western specialty-crop areas, and the range-livestock areas. There are fewest such organizations in the general and self-sufficing areas and in the cotton belt, where the participation of the people in general community organizations is commonly restricted largely to the landowning families of the upper- and middle-income groups.

There are great differences also in the extent to which farmers in the various major type-farming areas respond to the developments of science and adopt them in their work. The farmers in the Western specialty-crop areas and the wheat areas are keenly aware of the need for keeping up with the latest research and for experimenting with new ways of doing things. This is most marked among the larger producers of specialty-farm products on the West coast. The more alert farmers in the dairy areas, the corn belt, and the range-livestock areas also follow closely the research done at agricultural colleges and experiment stations, and by private organizations, which might have meaning to them in their farming operations. But although some farmers in all regions keep abreast of the latest research, the farmers in the cotton belt and in the general and self-sufficing areas are least inclined to rely on science. In fact, theories about planting by the moon are still held quite widely among the least educated and lowest-income farm groups in these two regions.

The influence of tenure and of nationality upon the participation of farm people in special-interest farm group activities and in community affairs generally differs noticeably from one major type-farming region to another. In the corn belt, wheat areas, Western specialty-crop areas, and range-livestock areas tenure makes little difference, but nationality often does in the last two. In the cotton belt, plantation farming and institutionalized biracialism have, by tradition, virtually precluded the participation of the nonwhites; the low socio-economic status of most non-landowning whites here severely restricts their participation as well. The situation in the dairy areas and the general and self-sufficing areas is in between, with tenure and nationality making much more difference than they do in the corn belt and the wheat areas, and much less difference than they do in the cotton belt.

Basic Attitudes and Current Changes by Type-Farming Areas

The dominant attitudes and changes in rural life that differ by major type-farming areas center around such matters as ownership of land, security and speculation, mechanization, urbanization, and economic and psychological self-sufficiency. While farmers everywhere value security, and the ownership of the land has traditionally been highly prized, in recent decades the emphasis farmers place on the ownership of the land has been waning, especially in the portions of the country that were last settled. Although traditional attitude toward farm ownership remains most constant in the three Eastern regions, in the dairy areas and the cotton belt, particularly where mechanization is under way, there are clear evidences that the ownership of land is not so highly prized as formerly. Except for the farmers in the religious cultural islands in various parts of the country – the Amish, Mennonites, Mormons, and so on – the group which still values ownership of land the most seems to be the more self-sufficient farmers in the hill country of the general and self-sufficing areas, who still value their own personal independence above the opportunity to make money. Evidence that the value placed upon farm ownership is declining in the corn belt and the wheat areas, consists of the fact that an increasing proportion of the land is being operated by lessors rather than by owners, that the largest operations are carried on by tenants rather than by owners, and that the farmers as a whole have a declining equity in the farms they operate. This trend clearly demonstrates that farm people themselves are putting less value on the ownership of land than on the purchase and use of machinery and livestock on extensive acreages in order to secure high incomes. It is of significance, too, that in the four Western type-farming regions the ownership of land does not afford nearly so much additional social status to a farm family as it does in the three older, Eastern type-farming areas. Landownership means most in terms of status in the cotton belt, where a background of slavery meant that even the ownership of a small tract clearly differentiated a family from the slaves or from the propertyless whites who were in competition with slave labor. It is in the Western specialty-crop areas that land ownership means least, for land here is not infrequently looked upon as a commodity along with farm wage labor and machinery.

Security is sought nearly everywhere, but the means of obtaining it vary markedly in the different type-farming regions. For example, in the general and self-sufficing areas and to a noticeable extent in the dairy areas, security is commonly interpreted as being free of debt. However, in most other major type-farming regions, especially in the new, Western parts of the country, debt is regarded as a means of carrying on operations large enough to achieve security.

Speculative farming is considered normal in the wheat areas and the range-livestock areas, where, because of uncertain crop and livestock yields, the best way to make a success of farming is to carry on extensive operations each year so that the big returns of the good years will provide the means for successfully getting through the recurring periods of low rainfall. Speculation is also prevalent among big farmers and little farmers in the cotton belt, where the risks are high as yields and prices fluctuate. There is much speculation, too, in the Western specialty-crop areas, where many operations are large and of an industrialized character. In recent years there has been a marked decrease in the value put on highly speculative farming in most regions; but at the same time, farming in general is perhaps becoming more speculative because of increased mechanization and specialization. Numerous and widespread attempts are being made to lessen risks. In the wheat areas the attempts consist of moisture conservation programs and of supplementary livestock enterprises. In the range-livestock areas more dependable livestock watering and grazing facilities are being developed by utilizing a larger natural unit, such as the watershed of a stream. In the cotton belt owner-operators and tenants are becoming more and more interested in soil conservation practices and in the production of more home-grown food and feed. In the corn belt and the dairy areas soil conservation practices are on the increase, and larger co-operatives are being developed in order to achieve greater efficiency in marketing farm products and in purchasing supplies. Still, along with these developments of recent years that attempt to reduce the risks in farming in one area after another, there has been the increased dependence of farm families upon larger and larger cash incomes, which are needed to purchase and maintain farm machinery.

The high value early placed on the use of farm machinery in the corn belt and wheat areas now extends to the larger farmer in all parts of the country. Machines have recently been developed that are proving practicable in the production of cotton, sugar cane, and sugar beets. The prospect of the rapid mechanization of these crops is affording the more substantial operators in these areas a new and more optimistic outlook. The other side of the picture is that greater human adjustments may be involved in these areas which may have more important reverberations through the nation than have heretofore resulted from agricultural technology in this country. Each mechanical cotton picker, cane cutter, and beet harvester displaces a large number of hand workers; a great proportion of the people who are already leaving the farms in greatest numbers are the low-status Negro, Mexican, and native white croppers and wage workers. These groups have long been accustomed to low incomes and to taking little or no part in the determination of local matters where they live and work. In fact, they constitute the most inarticulate large group of rural people in the nation. Most of them have never voted, many of them have no permanent residence, and few own any productive property; they possess but a minimum of skills, have but little formal education, and are often in poor physical health because of lack of adequate diets and medical care. Where they will go and what they will do after they leave the farms are questions to which urban and rural people throughout the nation should now give attention. It is also of great importance that even more machines are being used in the areas that have been mechanized longest and most fully, such as the wheat areas, the corn belt, the dairy areas, and the Western specialty-crop areas. In the wheat areas and in the corn belt, farming operations are being enlarged, and the number of farm wage workers as well as of farm operators continues to decline as operator families do more and more of the work on their enlarged farms. Milking machines bring the same kind of changes in the dairy country and in the smaller scattered sections where dairying is important. The various power-driven machines used in specialty-crop and range-livestock farming are having their effect too. If machinery were not used wherever possible in the Western specialty-crop areas, the size of the wage working group would be much larger than it is now.

Attitudes towards education and religion vary greatly, and are changing. Education is increasingly prized for its practical value by dairy farmers, corn farmers, wheat farmers and by the higher-income farm elements in the cotton belt, the range-livestock areas, and the Western specialty-crop areas. It is also valued by some of the lower-income parents in these three latter regions and by the majority of those in the general and self-sufficing areas, for numerous parents look upon education as the best means of helping their children achieve the American goal of a higher economic and social status than they have had. Religion, as expressed in church participation and loyalty, is most valued in the three older, Eastern type-farming regions, and is progressively less valued in the Western regions. The corn belt occupies a midway position, although it is more closely identified in this respect with the Eastern than with the Western regions. As for the newer emotional sects, they are gaining adherents most rapidly among the lower-income elements of the rural population in the Western specialty-crop areas, the cotton belt, and the general and self-sufficing areas; they are making fewest gains in the dairy areas and the corn belt.

The degree of urbanization varies from one type-farming region to another; it is increasing in most parts of rural United States as the living and thinking of the rural and urban populations become more and more alike. In analyzing the population changes that have occurred between 1890 and 1940 in incorporated towns with populations of less than 2,500, S. C. Ratcliffe found that, for each decade, the smaller the town the greater the likelihood of its losing population. From 1930 to 1940, nearly half of the towns of under 500, three-tenths of those of 500 to 999, and one-fifth of those of 1,000 to 2,500 lost population. The highest proportion of towns in decline was in the states in the wheat areas; the smallest, in the dairy areas. But practically everywhere, except in the dairy areas and in the least mechanized sections of the cotton belt and the general and self-sufficing areas, the smaller towns were in rapid decline as rural people turned increasingly to the larger towns for economic and social services. In the dairy areas the small towns are maintained as the local marketing points for fluid milk or as the location of co-operative cheese factories or creameries, while in the least mechanized portions of the cotton belt and the general and self-sufficing areas, the small towns remain the trading centers of low-income owner-operator and tenant families, the majority of whom do not have automobiles and so do their trading within wagon or walking distance.

The relatively high value the farmer has put on his own economic and psychological self-sufficiency is well known. Even so, it has for some time been in decline in the commercial crop regions. The decline is becoming generally apparent, even reaching into many of the more isolated sections of the general and self-sufficing areas, which have long been the strongholds of traditional rural individualism. With new contacts and new wants, the highlanders — along with the rural dwellers in other regions — are seeking larger cash incomes from their farms and from off-farm work. The farm people in nearly all major type-farming areas are relying less and less on the old forms of mutual aid among themselves as neighbors, and are putting more reliance on technology and the findings of scientific research, on organized efforts to maintain good prices for farm products, and on membership in co-operatives, crop and livestock associations, and organizations such as Blue Cross Hospitalization. Traditional rural individualism may be expected to decline still further as farmers continue to mechanize and enlarge their farms and to put more emphasis upon having modern conveniences in their homes. The greatest changes in attitudes toward traditional ways of doing things may be expected in the general and self-sufficing areas, where contacts of rural people with outsiders are still most limited, and in the cotton belt, where mechanized farming is just getting under way and where the farm population will probably decline sharply as farm units are enlarged and levels of living rise. The fewest changes may be expected in such regions as the corn belt and the dairy areas, where farming is already highly commercial and mechanized, where many farm homes already have modern conveniences, and where farmers are increasingly accustomed to working with one another in purchasing their supplies and marketing their farm products.

PART V

FARMERS IN A CHANGING WORLD

CHAPTER 28

FARM PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

BY EDGAR A. SCHULER AND CARL C. TAYLOR

Interpretations of Others of Farmers and Their Attitudes

"ATTITUDE" is a term used loosely, and while it will be specifically defined later in this chapter it is interesting to note how some important persons have used it to describe the personality characteristics of farmers. Many philosophers, scientists, writers, and artists have declared that farm people differ from city people in their purposes and values. For instance, Horace said, "Happy he who far from business, like the primitive race of mortals, cultivates with his own oxen the fields of his fathers, free from all anxieties of gain"; and Cato said, "The agricultural population produces the bravest men, the most valiant soldiers, and a class of citizens the least given of all to evil designers." According to Thomas Jefferson, "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if He had a chosen people whose breasts He made His peculiar deposits for substantial and genuine virtue." And other founders of American society shared Jefferson's appraisal of farmers.

The *Union Agriculturalist and Western Prairie Farmer* of August 1841 also praised the American farmer: "The farmer is the most noble and independent man in society. He has ever been honored and respected from the days of Cincinnatus, the Roman farmer, to the present time." Similar opinions have been expressed by statesmen, agricultural leaders, and writers in every generation. A recent quotation from the writings of a well-known agricultural leader of today, M. L. Wilson, former Under Secretary of Agriculture and present Director of the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture proves that this general thesis about farmers still exists. Mr. Wilson wrote, "There is reason to believe that under favorable conditions farm life is the good life. . . . I am aware of the shortcomings characteristic of many farm cultures, both past and present. . . . But I am profoundly impressed by the unique opportunity for a *natural* life that a rural culture can offer." Paul Johnstone summarizes a discussion of this traditional attitude by saying, "Agricultural life is the natural life, and, being natural, is therefore good." He adds, "The ever-present corollary is that city life and urban culture are inevitably enervating and corrupt."

Some who disagree with these beliefs label them "agricultural romanticism." Others hold more acid views. These critics may not go so far as to call farmers "clodhoppers," "hayseeds," "hicks," or "reubens," but they do not hesitate to claim that a high degree of isolation, much hard routine, manual labor, and the comparative absence of diverse group experiences have certainly made the average farmer provincial and have probably made him a plowman psychologically as well as physically. The works of many painters and writers have contributed to the notion that farmers are mentally and socially different from others. "The Gleaners," "The Man with a Hoe," "The Sower," and many other poems and pictures portray farmers as plodding, dull people. Writers of rural fiction range all the way from idealizing farm dwellers to belittling them. Such books as Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil,* Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth,* and Rawlings' *The Yearling* undoubtedly make contributions to an understanding of the farmer's psychology, but the information they give is sometimes invalid and never precise. None of these novels makes a critical or scientific analysis of the farmer's attitudes.

James Mickel Williams in his *Our Rural Heritage* and *The Expansion of Rural Life* was the first sociologist to attempt a systematic analysis of farmers' attitudes. In his preface to the former book, the author says, "This book . . . offers an analysis of the attitudes and beliefs that enter into our rural heritage." The book itself describes and analyzes the rural attitudes that prevailed in New York State until about 1874. In *The Expansion of Rural Life,* he deals with what happened to these early attitudes and discusses new attitudes that developed between 1874 and 1924. A brief summary of these attitudes will indicate the extent to which a social psychologist agrees with the appraisals of the philosophers, the artists, and the literati cited above. The most basic attitudes Williams lists are those of self-reliance, independence, self-restraint, industriousness, persistence, courage, thrift, ingenuity, generosity, honesty, sincerity, strength of conviction, and reverence. He also discusses beliefs and what he calls "dispositions." Perhaps it would be better, however, to designate these as the personality traits of farm people.

Williams claims that the force of their physical environment tends to make farmers somewhat fatalistic. He also states that the significance which they attach to landownership gives them a deep reverence for property. Because of their own forthrightness, they usually trust members of their own families and neighborhoods while they considerably mistrust strangers. And he concludes that while all, or at least most, of these attitudes have changed with increasing human and business contacts, they still linger not only among farmers but also among many others who cling to traditions that are part of our rural heritage.

In the revised edition of his *Rural Sociology* Taylor attempted to summarize farmers' attitudes which had been listed in the writings of eight rural sociologists. The following list presents the six characteristics that were most often mentioned, arranged in order of greatest agreement among the eight sociologists: farmers are markedly individualistic or independent, conservative, mystic, possessed of deep convictions, superstitious, and resigned oı even fatalistic. But again these are personality traits rather than attitudes. Furthermore, all of them are deductions based on broad rather than on detailed and precise observations.

Unfortunately, as has just been implied, there are few research data on the attitudes and opinions of American farms which help to answer such important questions as whether farming and farm life cause fundamental psychological and cultural differences between farm people and others, and if so, whether these differences are decreasing and may ultimately disappear. But it is possible to know the voting behavior of farmers, the voting records of lawmakers whose constituents are predominantly rural, and the resolutions that are passed by farmers' organizations. These furnish data which can be used for broad interpretations of farmers' opinions on both agricultural and public issues. It is also possible to know, in considerable detail, the differences between the working and living conditions of farmers and others and to draw broad deductions about the influences of these conditions on the attitudes of farm people. Two such studies have been made: one by Stuart A. Rice entitled *Farmers and Laborers in Politics* and the other by Louis Bean entitled *Ballot Behavior of Farmers.*

In his study, Rice concluded that, consciously or unconsciously, farmers tend to show some unanimity in political attitudes. For instance, he discovered a definite correlation between what he called "political insurgency" and ruralism. Bean, in his work, described Rice's insurgent areas as areas of "flexible" voting behavior, by which he meant that when confronted with public issues, farmers were relatively independent of national patterns. Certainly farmers have contributed more than their share of votes for third parties, such as the "greenback," "anti-monopoly," "Independent," "Populist," "Fusion," and others. Rice stated, "It would appear that 'progressivism' and 'insurgency' are phenomena associated largely with state and local issues," but this is only another way of saying that farmers form voting blocs in behalf of those things which they deem important to agriculture. He analyzed the public records of political behavior of farmer and labor members of legislative bodies, especially their election returns and roll-call votes. He also assembled information on vote-switching between the two major parties as the voting was apparently influenced by specific issues. Scoring the 48 states on a scale of "progressivism" or "insurgency," he found that the following states ranked highest: North Dakota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Washington, Iowa, Minnesota, Idaho, and Montana. Of the 18 states that he classified as "insurgent," all but 3 were at least 50 per cent rural according to the last census preceding his study. Sixteen of them are the same as those that Bean classified as "flexible." Thus, by a study of each particular election and its issues, it becomes clear that Midwestern and Western farmers are definitely independent in voting behavior.

Bean's study is primarily an analysis of changes in electoral votes in periods of pronounced political shifts. In these changes, he discovers the degree of political independence or "flexibility" of political behavior in presidential elections. Using states as his units, he shows that those in the North Central and Western regions have been the most "politically flexible," while those in the East and South have been the least flexible. He also records the states that cast heavy votes for the "third party" in 1924. The outstanding ones were Wisconsin, North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, California, and Wyoming. From his data it is apparent that the Midwestern and Western farm states are relatively independent. Furthermore, he analyzes data for as far back as 1896, and the facts tend to show that as industrialism has spread westward the degree of flexibility or independence has lessened.

Factors Which Fundamentally Affect Farmers' Attitudes and Opinions

Persons who farm constitute an occupational group. They are farmers. The American farmer is usually both a planner and a doer, for he exercises the functions of both management and labor. Within the basic framework of the land, the climate, and the time of year, there are many possible choices regarding the direction of his effort. As manager he is not only free to make most of the decisions that affect his seasonal, weekly, and daily pattern of activity, but he is also compelled to make these choices either consciously or unconsciously. Moreover, the typical farmer is very keenly aware of being his own boss. He is about as independent as is possible under modern conditions, and he is aware of this and takes pride and satisfaction in it. Sometimes this feeling of independence is so ingrained in his makeup that his thinking may be provincial or narrowly nationalistic. The two World Wars, however, with accompanying economic gyrations, have forced upon farm people (as well as everyone else) some awareness of interdependence. Yet the fundamental fact remains: farm people are characterized by a feeling of independence which is basic and unlikely to disappear rapidly.

After deciding, as a manager, what needs to be done, the American farmer then goes about doing it. In spite of all the mechanization that helps to relieve the aching muscles of farm men and women, there is a lot of plain, heavy physical work to be done on the farm. This causes farm people to value highly such traits as physical strength and vitality, energy and endurance, and effort and output. It causes them to place less confidence in what people say than in what they do, and to emphasize the simple, the plain, and the practical. Naturally, farm people resent the person who is afraid to get his hands dirty, who never "works up a sweat," who is ashamed to wear work clothes, or who is unwilling to put in a good (long) day's work at "honest" toil.

A second occupational factor, which may be even more fundamental than the characteristic integration of management and labor, is the basic dependence of farm people on physiographic factors which are largely beyond control. The topography, the depth and richness of topsoil, the length of the growing season, the amount and distribution of rainfall, snow, and hail, the amount of sunshine, variations in temperature, and amounts of sustained "good growing weather" – all these and more are conditions that tend to humble the farmer in the face of nature. It is true that scientists of all kinds, educators, inventors, engineers, technologists, and modern means of communication and transportation have helped increase the farmer's control over his own destiny. But the fundamental forces of nature are still untamed. Irrigation and dry land farming may be made more efficient, but drought can still spell disaster for the farmer. A late freeze or early frost can ruin the crop for all farmers, except the citrus-fruit grower with his smudge-potted groves. Also, plant and animal diseases and insect pests, although largely controlled by modern scientific means, are still sometimes a hazard.

While all these influences may not bear on each individual farm or farm family, some are practically inescapable. The combined effects of the hazards of one area help to develop in the people a philosophy of life that is radically different from that of people who must cope with other forces. Some areas are much less subject to wide fluctuations of quantity and quality of yield than are others. Where the fluctuations are widest the farmer tends to have the psychology of the gambler: "After a man has had a string of bad luck, things are bound to pick up." Where natural forces are most consistently favorable, the individual's industry and the stability of his performance are likely to be predominant. In those limited types of farming that are not particularly subject to the hazards of climate and weather, such as the production of poultry under shelter, the occupation is not so much farming but, rather, a business concern or special type of manufacturing.

The third occupational factor to be considered – one closely related to both of those already discussed – is the wide variation of jobs and skills demanded over the course of years on the farm. Within any given year there is a tremendous variety of activities, depending in part on the type of farming involved, the scale of operations, the degree of mechanization, and the degree of rationalization of farming – that is, the degree to which all phases of farm operation are permeated by scientific knowledge and by application of technological developments designed to achieve optimum farming results. But over the years, the decisions and efforts required may involve a much wider range than are necessary in any given year. Machinery gets old and has to be repaired or replaced; some fields need to be put to different uses; new types of seed must be secured; new fertilizers, new breeding stock, and new marketing outlets need to be developed; and the changes in the labor force that occur as the children grow up must be taken into account. Indeed, the infinite variety of practical problems that must be dealt with, although with traditional solutions, calls for a high degree of versatility, self-reliance, and resourcefulness if the farmer is to be successful. This range of activities involves not only the ability to formulate plans and make decisions, but also the manual skill and know-how to execute them.

It is the relative isolation of farm people, however, that is the major factor influencing their psychology. For with few exceptions, such as the Mormon villages and the French villages along some of the bayous of Louisiana, American farmsteads are typically scattered. To be sure, the isolation of the farm family is not so extreme today as it was under pioneering conditions, but in spite of denser settlement, good highways, automobiles, telephones, and radios, the farmer has less need and less opportunity for coming in contact with people outside his own family than does the average worker. The farmer's personality traits — his reflectiveness, independence, and tendency to have deep convictions — are strongly influenced by his social isolation.

Still another important influence in the social psychology of farm people is the intimate relationship between occupation and family life. *Successful Farming,* in the August 1939 issue, reports the proportions of husbands and wives, and of boys and girls in farm families, who do various types of farm work. The following are the figures for each 100 farm families:

Family Member	Field Work	Livestock	Milking	Vegetable Garden	Poultry
Husband	80	76	65	49	30
Boys	36	34	35	23	14
Wife	3	4	22	63	71
Girls	2	1	6	14	13
Hired Man	37	22	21	13	8

According to the article, in 38 per cent of the families the wife and children help out even in field work, the heaviest type of labor. The table clearly shows the extent to which the types of work are divided on sex and age lines. Thus, field work and the care of livestock are the responsibilities of the farmer and of the farm boys; milking, too, is mainly the job of the farmer and his sons, but calls for a much larger share of help from the wife and daughters than field work and the care of livestock. Care of the vegetable garden and, to an even greater extent, of poultry, are chiefly responsibilities of the wife and children. These data, although based on responses from families operating widely different types of farms, show in broad outline the great degree of interdependence that exists between husband and wife, and parent and child, in carrying on the activities that not only provide a living but also form a significant part of the family relationships characteristic of farm life. While the data do not report on attitudes as such, they do report on experiences which surely must influence attitudes.

Basic Attitudes of Farm People

Since the terms "attitude" and "opinion" have been defined in different ways by various writers, it may serve to avoid confusion if an explanation is given of how they are used in the present chapter. By "opinions" is meant a verbal expression bearing on a question of fact, a matter that may be true or false or partly correct, but that is at any rate subject to verification by objective means. On the other hand, "attitude" refers to a verbal expression of a feeling about or toward a person, a group, an institution, an idea, and so on.

Usually the possible types of feeling can be classified broadly in three categories: favorable, unfavorable, and indifferent. And although there may be variations in the intensity of feeling,, basically they will fall along a continuum which ranges from a "pro" pole at one extreme to a "con" pole at the other. Thus, "I *wish* my son *would* grow up to be a farmer" indicates an attitude toward farming, whereas, "I *think* my son *will* grow up to be a farmer" illustrates an opinion about a son's probable occupation. The first statement does not reveal whether the speaker has any reason to believe his son will become a farmer; while the second does not reveal whether the speaker approves or disapproves the occupation of farming for his son. Depending on one's purpose, either type of information may be useful or necessary, but they definitely represent different types of psychological data. This is true even if they are sometimes combined in a single statement: "I wish my son would become a farmer, but I doubt that he will."

This distinction, apparently clear-cut and simple in analysis, is by no means so sharply drawn in the living, acting person. There are always the emotional and the rational components, inseparable so long as the personality is a functioning whole. Every type of experience, every aspect of environment, contributes to the conditioning of the whole. In general, the experiences of the early years leave the most fundamental impressions on the emotional component, whereas opinions are often subject to drastic change on the basis of new facts or new experience. But the opinion, since it is still simply one expression of the total personality, may bob about like a boat in a storm without pulling loose from its anchorage in emotional conditioning.

What people say in words is only a small part of what they actually do. Sometimes verbal reports square with non-verbal actions, while at other times the two may be contradictory. Sound social understanding can therefore be gained only by considering both types of evidence — what people say, and what they do.

On the nontechnical side, there has been a tremendous expansion, particularly during the past ten years, of so-called public opinion polling, much of which consists of a simple type of attitude study. George Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion, which releases its reports through newspapers, has probably done more than any other agency to popularize this kind of activity. However, doubt and distrust have been created when the polling involved an apparent oversimplification of complex and vital matters. The modern type of carefully controlled, small, sample study definitely came to stay, however, when in the 1936 presidential election it proved to be far more reliable than the *Literary Digest* type of operation, which depended on large numbers and hoped for the best. The advantages of the newer techniques have, in fact, been recognized by various magazines, such as *Fortune*, which employs the services of Elmo Roper's organization, and *Successful Farming*, which uses the American Institute of Public Opinion. Relevant data from both these journals are presented later in this chapter.

As work in this general field has expanded it is noteworthy that the type of inquiry has broadened to include not only expressions of attitude (the traditional "public opinion poll") but also matters of knowledge, opinion, belief, experience, behavior, and so on. During the war, for example, efforts were made to use the polling approach to evaluate current food habits and consumption practices bearing on nutrition and on the preferences and behavior of potential purchasers. Let us examine the results of some of the most important polls of recent years.

Late in 1942, or early in 1943, Elmo Roper's interviewers presented farm men and women with these questions: "What are one or two things you like most about being a farmer? Are there one or two things you don't like so well? What are one or two things you think you might not like so well about living in the city? What one or two things do you think you might like most?" The responses published in the March 1943 issue of *Fortune* are presented in the tables below. (Note that since some persons gave more than one response, the percentages add to over 100.)

"What are one or two things you like most about being a farmer? Are there one or two things you don't like so well?"

They like these things:	Farmers —	Wives
	%	%
Being own boss	55.7	28.6
Ample good food	13.8	35.3
Outdoor living	13.8	16.5
Kind of work	18.7	17.6
Quiet, privacy	6.4	18.3
Best for children	. . .	6.1
Other	13.1	19.7
Don't know	9.4	8.5
Multiple totals	130.9	150.6

They don't like these:	Farmers —	Wives
	%	%
Long hours, hard work	29.8	33.2
Not enough money	15.0	9.4
Insects, bad weather	5.2	2.8
Lack of convenience	1.4	12.2
Lack of transportation	. . .	10.0
Other	15.0	14.8
Nothing	7.0	5.8
Don't know	38.3	28.3
Multiple totals	111.7	116.5

"What are one or two things you think you might not like so well about living in the city? What one or two things do you think you might like most?"

They would dislike these:	Farmers —	Wives
	%	%
Too crowded	34.7	39.0
Noise, confusion	12.0	16.0
Too expensive	8.6	3.4
Not own boss	6.4	. . .
Dirty, poor air	5.7	9.3
Bad for children	. . .	7.7
Other	20.5	20.7
Don't know	32.1	26.0
Multiple totals	120.0	122.1

They think they would like these:	Farmers —	Wives
	%	%
Short hours, easy work	12.6	6.7
More money	8.6	. . .
Modern conveniences	4.3	24.9
Good transportation	3.9	31.6
Contact with people	1.3	3.8
Other	11.4	16.8
Nothing	14.5	7.7
Don't know	50.9	28.9
Multiple totals	107.5	120.4

In short, farm people like farming and farm life. For among both farmers and farm wives, nine out of ten were able to report one or more things they liked about farming and farm life. Less than one in ten could think of nothing good to say about farming. Moreover, four times as many farm wives and five times as many farmers had not a single concrete dislike regarding farming. In fact, two-thirds of the farmers could not think of anything about city life that they would especially like, while the same was true of over one-third of the farm wives. In the same survey this question was asked: "Consider people living in the country, in a small town, or in a large city. Which do you feel generally get most satisfaction out of life?" Seven out of ten farm people thought that people living in the country got most satisfaction out of life. Two out of ten said there was no difference or else they didn't know. Only about one out of twenty-five specified city or small town people. A study of corn belt and cotton belt farmers made in 1936–1937 included the question: "Would you rather farm than do anything else for a living?" Over four out of five farmers replied "Yes." This strong favorable vote may, however, be partly due to the form of the question, which unfortunately stacks the cards in favor of an affirmative reply.

Another approach to the same problem is to find out the kind of occupation adults would like their children to take up. In the study just cited this question was asked: "If you had your choice what would you prefer to have a son do for a living?" Farming was the choice of 39 per cent of the Negro farmers, 36 per cent of the Northern, and 35 per cent of the Southern white farmers. The importance of race differences is apparent, however, when it is noted that other occupations were chosen by nearly one-half of the Negro farmers, but only by one-fifth and one-seventh of the Southern and Northern white farmers respectively. The remainder either indicated they didn't want to specify a choice, often saying that should be a matter for the son himself to decide, or were uncertain as to what their choice was.

In the July 1938 issue, *Successful Farming* reported the response of a national sample of farmers to this question: "Would you advise your children to stay on in farming or to prepare themselves for jobs in the city?" Notice that the formulation, "jobs in the city," introduces the place of residence as well as the occupation, and we have already seen that "city as a place of residence conjures up no overwhelming enthusiasm among most farm people. Perhaps it is not so surprising, therefore, to find *Successful Farming* reporting that "Two out of every three farmers advise their children to stay on in farming rather than prepare themselves for city jobs." In the December 1945 issue, the same publication reported on another formulation of this question: "If you had a son with ability and he could have any training he wanted, what business, profession, trade or occupation would you most like to have him take up if he wanted your advice?" Perhaps because of the wartime shortage of medical personnel, and certainly reflecting the high prestige of the medical profession, the occupation of doctor received most choices (21 per cent). Farming was a close second with 19 per cent. Engineer (10 per cent), lawyer (8 per cent), no answer (8 per cent), "let him decide" (7 per cent – in spite of the question's qualification, "if he wanted your advice"), and minister or priest (5 per cent) are the only other categories that received as much as 5 per cent of the responses. It is noteworthy however, that Midwestern farmers, as compared with all other farmers, ranked farming relatively much higher. In fact, farmer was first choice for

26 per cent of the Midwestern farmers, with doctor a poor second (only 12 per cent). For all other farmers it was doctor first (28 per cent) and farmer second (only 13 per cent).

The *Fortune* survey results also showed how important the feeling of independence is among both farmers and farm housewives. As one of the things they most liked about being a farmer, over half of the farmers cited "being own boss." And among housewives almost three out of ten gave the same response. Only one other item, ample good food, received more frequent mention, with one out of three citing it as desirable. Since we do not have access to the actual responses, but only to the terms of the categories into which the responses were classified, we cannot be sure about the precise meaning or the kind of objections farm people had to city life when their replies fell under the heading "too crowded." At any rate, it seems reasonable to infer that they mean: "I don't like the idea of being too much hemmed in by people; living in the city would cramp my style, and it would reduce my independence."

Religious institutions and organizations are important among farm people, a fact that is supported by several types of evidence. For example, *Successful Farming* (June 1938, p. 11) reports that in response to the question, "Do you think the rural church has failed you and your family?" 88 per cent of the farmers said "No." And the *Fortune* survey states that "A large majority of farm dwellers believe there is a God who rewards and punishes after death (farmers 86.2 per cent; wives 89 per cent; hired hands, 85.4 per cent)." Moreover, a Bureau of Agricultural Economics sample study of farm operations, which was made in October 1943, showed that among all organized local community affairs participation in religious activities had relatively great weight. In fact about three-fourths of the Southern, two-thirds of the Northern, and almost half of the Western farmers and farm housewives reported such participation, whereas the proportions for other types of group activity were much lower. The Consumer Purchases Study, which was made in 1935–6, showed that expenditures for church, Sunday School, and missions were reported by relatively high proportions of farm families in both the low- and the high-income groups. Such data, even though they are not conventional psychological evidence, clearly indicate the importance that farm people attach to religion and to religious organizations and activities.

Some Examples of Variations in Values and Attitudes

A series of six rural community studies recently conducted by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics provides an excellent basis for observing some of the sharp contrasts to be found in the values and related attitudes and opinions of American farm people today.

A picture of an Iowa corn belt community is presented by Edward O. Moe and Carl C. Taylor. Although not intended to serve as a perfect example of this region, it probably gives a good idea of some of the central values of typical Midwestern farm people. It reveals that desire for ownership of the land is widespread and very strong, although possibly not so intense now as in earlier years. This desire is an expression of the urge for security, both economic and psychosocial; and the fact that it has often been thwarted, as is suggested by the rise of tendency, has led to some feelings of fear and uncertainty. As the authors indicate, however, young people do not always share these fears of their parents, for they recognize that conditions today are not what they were for earlier generations. Still, they are striving to achieve the same type of economic independence that their ancestors enjoyed. Moreover, while the traditional ideals of thrift and personal responsibility are perhaps less emphasized today than formerly, they are still important values whether the young people go into farming or into some nonfarm occupation. As one informant put it, "The greatest contribution that parents can make to their sons and daughters is 'to teach them to stand on their own feet and to be independent.' "

Quite a different value pattern is revealed in Earl H. Bell's study of the speculative wheat belt farmer. Rather than expecting to succeed through unremitting industry and thrift, he hopes sooner or later to "strike it rich." The highly variable rainfall, which is of course completely beyond his control, induces the feeling that luck or fate is more responsible for success or failure than the individual's own efforts, regardless of how painstaking he may be. There is even the feeling that changing farming practices from year to year is more likely to yield a bonanza payoff than is a routine adherence to some one system of farming. And along with this venturesome spirit, this willingness to try anything once, goes an attitude of optimism which Bell characterizes as "nearly unbelievable." The idea that work is in itself good for people is totally lacking. Thrift and industry, and the slow and steady winning of economic security and independence, have no great appeal in a situation where the most essential elements for success are unpredictable and uncontrollable.

An old New England community, Landaff, New Hampshire, is described by Kenneth MacLeish and Kimball Young. Here hard work and thrift, the ability to achieve independence (possibly even at some economic disadvantage), and the freedom to be highly individualistic are the values that appear to be most basic among the established farm families. Among the families who are not so deeply rooted, these values are not of course necessarily characteristic. But MacLeish and Young have given a concise value portrait of the typical farmer of this community. They report that, "A man feels proud if he can say, 'I don't owe any man, and I don't expect any favors. This is my place and I made it what it is. I can take care of myself and my family, and no one has the right to tell me how to run my business.' " This stress on independence and individualism at times forces them to get by with very little. But this is of no great concern so long as the basic values, or the measures of success, are thereby fulfilled.

Turning to the study that Olen Leonard and Charles P. Loomis made of a Spanish-American community, El Cerrito, we find the stereotype of the farmer's "thrift and industry" as badly shattered as in the wheat belt, but for quite different reasons. In terms of religion, all the people of this little agricultural community are Roman Catholic. "The church and its teachings play a tremendously important role in the attitudes, practices, and everyday life of these people." It is a source of strength and assurance in a situation that "has become increasingly difficult and uncertain." Possibly even more basic are the family and the kinship relationships. The individual's worth, his success or failure, are measured largely in terms of the extent to which family obligations and responsibilities are carried out. Thrift and hard work are regarded simply as means to an end rather than as ends in themselves. The necessity of work to achieve independence, security, land, or money is fully recognized. But idleness and the enjoyment of leisure time are not therefore regarded as wicked or demoralizing.

Although insignificant from a numerical point of view, the religious sect known as the Old Order Amish provides an illuminating example of religious conservatism combined with agricultural progressiveness. The report by Walter Kollmorgen on such a community in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, points out that the Amishman's attachment to his land in the family and in the group, is looked on with suspicion if not hostility. Public schools, for example, and especially high schools, are opposed because they represent to the Amish a threat to their commmunity integrity and their rural way of living. On the other hand, new developments in the field of agriculture are not feared, but are actively sought and tried out. And if they prove successful, imitation tends to follow quickly.

The final study of this series, Waller Wynne's treatment of Harmony, Georgia, deals with a cotton belt community characterized by a fairly high proportion of Negroes and by the plantation tradition in landlord-tenant relationships. Arthur Raper, another investigator, has presented in his *Preface to Peasantry* the reciprocal sets of attitudes and opinions of landlord and tenant in two Georgia counties, Macon and Greene, which he has studied intensively. As a rule, the landlord's basic assumption is that "the tenant needs to be looked after like a child, he is improvident, and he works only when in need of food." This is matched by the tenant's typical basic assumption that the best he can do is to get a living out of his farming. Therefore, any small surplus he may accumulate is better devoted to the enrichment of living — whether by the temporary joys of a secondhand automobile or by the more sober satisfactions of food and clothing — than to the unattainable goal of landownership. Farming in the South is by no means confined to the plantation system. But in that region no other type of farming serves so well in presenting a contrast to the other situations here discussed. Moreover, in the plantation setting, tenure status, together with the social relationships thereby defined, is a very significant key to the understanding of the entire range of values, attitudes, and opinions held by persons in that social framework.

The influence of the institution of slavery on the thinking of even contemporary farm people in the South is too well known to require emphasis here. But it is only quite recently that recognition has been given to the influence of social stratification on farm people's attitudes and beliefs in rural areas outside the South. For this reason *Plainville, U. S. A.*, a study made by a young cultural anthropologist using the pen name of James West, is especially noteworthy. West presents graphically his conception of the social classes in "Plainville," which "stands between one of the well-known areas of American 'hillbilly' culture and the richer farming plains of the Midwest," and is "marginal to both areas." West says that the "backbone" of the community – that is, the members of the upper class which comprises about half of all the people in Plainville – are spoken of as "good, honest, self-respecting, average, everyday, working people." Their main values are financial honesty, a willingness to work, and personal morality. But among the "lower element," who live mainly in the hills rather than on the prairie, pioneering values are more significant. These people value self-sufficiency, an ability to live by hunting, fishing, and trapping, and avoidance of too much hard farm work; and, among the more reckless, there is respect for good fiddling and good dancing, hard fighting, and "good, hard drinking." Thus, West shows how pervasive and intimately interconnected are the objective and subjective aspects of the phenomena of social class, and how membership in a given class creates within the individual the basic matrix by which his values, attitudes, and opinions are formed.

Farmers' Opinions on Some Major Issues

In the light of contemporary world trends and conditions, perhaps the most significant question to be raised about farmers' thinking today is whether they are nationalistic or internationalistic in their outlook. This subject has been carefully treated in a recent study by Carl C. Taylor. He made use of data from public opinion polls, voting behavior in national elections, and resolutions adopted by national farmers' organizations. These data, says Dr. Taylor, do not yield an unequivocal answer to the question, "Are farmers more 'isolationist' than others?" But his conclusion is that farmers are still provincial in their thinking. That is, they are relatively isolated and chiefly concerned with what goes on in the family, neighborhood, and local community. These are the ends for which all other groupings and organizations are but means. Therefore, "They will object to an organization which seeks power for itself but they will favor international arrangements which give promises of strengthening and safeguarding" these ultimate values.

A second major question involves their opinion regarding the role of the national government in domestic affairs. The results that *Successful Farming* obtained in a survey and presented in the December 1945 issue are helpful on this point. About two-thirds of the farmers interviewed said they did not think the government should own the banks, the railroads, or the coal mines. Government ownership of the electric power companies received the highest proportion of favorable votes (27 per cent), the fewest negatives (49 per cent), and the most "no opinion" replies (24 per cent). In its July 1945 issue the same journal published results regarding knowledge of and attitudes toward the TVA. Only 62 per cent of the farmers interviewed had heard of

TVA, but of these over half said "Yes" when asked, "Would you like to see something similar organized for the Missouri Valley?" And only 6 per cent said "No." The other 20 per cent had no opinion. The ratio of approvals to disapprovals, which was about 6 to 1, is probably significant even though fewer than half of all the farmers responded.

A third major problem area, although it can hardly be called an issue, involves the relations between farmers and labor, particularly organized labor, and the attitudes of farmers regarding labor's expanding political activities. Of several possible polls bearing on this matter only two will be considered. On November 16, 1941, the American Institute of Public Opinion reported that farmers split almost evenly in response to the question, "Are you in favor of labor unions?" Just over half (52 per cent) said "Yes," while 48 per cent said "No." But *Fortune,* in its April 1943 issue, gives quite a different impression on the basis of responses to this question: "Suppose in five or six years it became clear that Congress was going to be dominated either by labor or by big business interests, and farmers couldn't do anything about it except throw their support one way or the other, which would you want farmers to support?" The side of labor was chosen by 45.2 per cent, that of big business by 24.5 per cent, while 30.3 per cent did not know. Thus the ratio of labor supporters to big business supporters was about two to one. It was also found that tenant farmers were more sympathetic to labor than were owners. It is entirely possible, however, that had the form of the question been somewhat different the results might have been altered. "Big business interests" is more likely to evoke a blindly resentful stereotyped response than is the simple term "labor." And this type of bias should not be overlooked in evaluating poll results.

A final problem, which is gradually developing into a genuine issue, involves the matter of opinions regarding medical care and health services. According to a United States Department of Agriculture publication, *Farmers Look at Postwar Prospects,* which was issued in May 1945, about four-fifths of a sample of farmers interviewed in various parts of the country favored an increase in public clinics in rural areas after the war. Over three out of four "said they would like to subscribe to some flat-rate prepayment plan to cover possible hospital bills for themselves and their families and to cover the cost of doctors' and nurses' services." A note of caution is given on the interpretation of these results, however: perhaps they mean less in terms of specific programs than they do as evidence of a "consciousness of need and a readiness to respond favorably to proposals for improved health facilities."

It was pointed out earlier in this chapter that most opinions are based on, or at least colored by, attitudes. But the relationship between the two is less direct in the cases of issues that do not involve the roles of individual persons. Before farm people became so much a part of the great society, most of their opinions were on topics that were of a local nature and therefore involved them personally. Today, most farm people in the United States are intelligent on many issues that are not related to personal or local affairs. Many of their opinions on national and international issues may be based much more upon what they have read than upon any conscious personal relationships they may have to those issues. As the isolation of farm people continues to lessen, there is reason to expect that on most issues of the day their attitudes, and especially their opinions, will be less different from others in their own society.

CHAPTER 29

THE FARMERS' MOVEMENT AND LARGE FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

What the Farmers' Movement Is

The farmers' movement, like the labor movement, is based on demands for relief from maladjustments. The need for "farm relief" is as old as commercialized agriculture in the United States and is definitely related to the problems of prices, markets, credits, and taxes. Appearing first among the cash-crop tobacco farmers of Virginia and Maryland in the middle of the seventeenth century, the demand rose to one of its highest tides in Shays' Rebellion, which took place in the latter part of the eighteenth century. And it has continued to exist from those days to the present.

Farmers' revolts have not all been marked by the violence of the tobacco insurgents or of the participants in Shays' Rebellion; more often they have been marked by demands for legislative action on the part of the Federal Congress and state legislatures or by attempts at co-operative buying and selling; a number of times they have taken the form of direct political action. They are, and have been since 1870, best and most truly represented by the programs of such general farmers' organizations as the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, the American Society of Equity, the Farmers' Union, and the Farm Bureau. Actually, only the high tides in farmer discontent have been marked by revolts and rebellion, and direct action farmers' groups have constituted only the left wing of a more stable and consistent farmers' movement which over the years has more or less persistently attempted to make necessary adjustments to a price and market economy into which American farming has gradually entered.

So long as American agriculture was largely a self-sufficient family economic enterprise and was largely represented by home-owning farmers, there was little occasion for a farmers' movement beyond general farmer protests against the quit-rents imposed by England in colonial days. Theoretically the self-sufficient farmer had no market or price problems. His sole task was to produce year after year the products for his own food, clothing, and shelter, while he went without those things that he could not produce and, so to speak, let the world go by. But American agriculture never was fully self-sufficient; even in earliest colonial times wheat, livestock, maize, and other products were grown for sale, and almost from the beginning of American settlement tobacco was a cash crop. Indeed, certain areas in Maryland and Virginia, at the very outset of their settlement, were converted into commercialized agriculture, and interestingly enough the first farmers' revolt, as well as later ones, arose in highly commercialized agricultural areas.

The Farmers' movement has seldom if ever been recognized in terms other than those of open rebellion and demands for relief legislation. It has never been thought of as a significant historic movement growing out of deep and persistent maladjustments between the economic enterprise of agriculture and the social status of rural people on one hand, and the economic enterprises and social status of people in other fields of endeavor. People are surprised and shocked when they read accounts of roads to markets blocked and picketed, of thousands of gallons of milk meant for delivery to city consumers dumped on the highways, of crowds of farmers stopping mortgage foreclosure sales, of sheriffs locked up or spirited away, and of interference with courts. Then the public becomes more or less convinced that otherwise conservative, isolated farmers must be in deep distress to band together in crowds and mobs and be so easily led by revolutionary reformers. But when one realizes that similar incidents have occurred a great many times in American history, and that the farmers' protests have always been against the same things, it is only reasonable to describe the total process and the whole sequence of events as a Farmers' Movement.

In 1620 Virginia planters protested against the tobacco monopoly granted by King James I. They were so persistent and so vocal in their protests that in 1621 the King withdrew the monopoly charter. Then, because prices for tobacco fell rapidly between 1620 and 1640, a demand was made for control of the industry, first by price-fixing and next by control of production. In fact, conditions got so bad and farmers were so deeply in debt in 1639 that the Virginia Assembly declared that all debts could be legally cancelled upon payment of 40 per cent in terms of tobacco, the price of which was already fixed by law above the level that would have been ordained by supply and demand. The point to be made is that the earliest farmers' movement in the United States arose in the agricultural area of the colonies that were the first to be highly commercialized. And the significance of the point is that the American farmers' movement has, from this first farmer protest in the 1620's to the farmer protests of today, revolved about price and market problems. Prices, credits, and markets are the common thread that has run through the farmers' movement just as persistently as the common thread of hours, wages, and working conditions has run through the labor movement. By following this common thread through one farmer protest or revolt after another we come to recognize an American farmers' movement.

A movement may be defined as an attempt by a large segment of some specific society to accomplish an adjustment of factors and conditions that are, or are believed to be, in maladjustment. In a static society and under a highly autocratic government, social and economic change must often be accomplished by revolution. In a dynamic society and under a democratic government, revolts and revolution are often forestalled by meeting the demands of a persistent movement. The study of a movement thus leads to an analysis of class consciousness, group conflict, class prejudices, crowd behavior, publics, and a number of other psychological phenomena and group techniques, as well as to an analysis of the economic and social conditions that give rise and persistent impetus to the movement.

The periods of uprisings by farmers are but the ebb and flow of an historic movement that deserves careful consideration not only because of its militant demands but also because of its many accomplishments, and because of the nature of the adjustments that it has sought to effect. An index to some of these adjustments is supplied by the protests that farmers have made. For the most part these protests have been against low prices or inadequate credit. In many instances, economic demands have sooner or later become political demands, so that farmer protests have evolved self-conscious farmer publics. The high tides in the farmers' movement in the United States have almost universally come during periods when farmers found themselves at a comparative disadvantage in relation to prices, markets, or credits — that is, during periods of agricultural depressions. If a curve were drawn to represent the high and low tides of the farmers' movement, the crests of this curve would quite regularly coincide with the troughs of a curve representing farmer commodity prices. It is significant, too, that large farmers' organizations came into existence, one after another, during periods of depression. Ever since 1870 there has continuously been at least one general farmers' organization in the nation. These organizations publish economic, social, and political programs; hold national, state, and local conventions; issue house organs; and maintain national and state legislative representatives. The farmers' movement was in existence long before any of the presently existing general farmers' organizations were founded, but since the organization of the Grange in the late 1860's, large farmers' organizations have carried the torch for the movement.

Large Farmers' Organizations an Index to the Farmers' Movement

A real understanding of the purpose, scope, and accomplishments of this country's large farmers' organizations cannot be secured merely by discussing the trials, errors, and success of a single such organization, for all of them, past and present, were and are part of the farmers' movement. The Farmers' Alliance, the largest farmers' organization ever to appear in the United States and probably the largest to appear in the whole world, is no longer in existence. The Grange waxed, waned, and then became great again. The Farmers' Union has lost nationally but it is gaining steadily in a few states. The American Society of Equity split into two organizations, one of which is still strong, the other, extinct. The Non-Partisan League is practically dead as an organization, but its influence is still definitely felt in certain areas. Other interesting fluctuations have occurred in other organizations, but only a very general description of these can be offered here.

The Patrons of Husbandry (*the Grange*) was organized in 1867 as a purely fraternal organization. During the early 1870's it rushed headlong into economic and political activities, and as a result its expansion was phenomenal. In 1868 there were in existence only four subordinate Granges, which were located in three states and had very few members; but by 1875 there were 21,697 subordinate Granges in thirty-three states, and they had an estimated total membership of 858,050. The Grange finally entered every state in the Union except Rhode Island. At its height the Grange was running stores, maintaining state purchasing agents, selling raw farm commodities co-operatively, and operating buying clubs, some manufacturing plants, and even a bank. In a few states the Grangers elected legislators, governors, and other officers, and in half a dozen states they were the dominant influence in as many independent parties. In all of these activities they were striking directly or indirectly at price, market, and credit adjustments. When the Farmers' Alliance was at its height around 1890, the Grange fell to its lowest ebb, but afterwards it recovered and has grown steadily ever since.

The subordinate Grange is a local community fraternal organization whose programs cover everything that concerns farming and rural life. Any three subordinate Granges may unite to form a Pomona Grange, which is generally a county Grange. A state Grange may be organized in any state in which there are fifteen subordinate Granges, and the Masters of the state Granges and their wives are always official delegates to the national Grange. As a whole the organization constitutes a national farm fraternity with seven degrees, the first four being given in the subordinate, the fifth in the Pomona, the sixth in the state, and the seventh in the national Grange. It is an impressive fact that, as a mouthpiece of the farmers' movement, the Grange has been constantly operative for eighty years.

The Southern Farmers' Alliance was organized in 1878, but its roots can be traced back, in some places, to a still earlier period. In 1882 the Grand Alliance was reported to have 120 locals in Texas. By 1887 it claimed 2,800 sub-Alliances and a total membership of 35,000. It combined with the Louisiana Farmers' Union in 1887 and 1888 with the Agricultural Wheel, which had previously absorbed a farmer-labor organization called the Brothers of Freedom. In 1889 the total membership of all these organizations was claimed to be between one and two millions, and as a consolidation of these groups the Farmers' Alliance became the largest single farmer organization ever to exist in the United States.

The Southern Farmers' Alliance, although fraternal, was also avowedly an economic organization. It established an elaborate plan for both buying and selling, began a number of manufacturing enterprises, attacked the credit problem by means of a definite organization, and claimed to have done millions of dollars' worth of business through its various economic projects. During the 1880's it took up the political cudgels that the Grange had dropped and in the sections where it was active exercised almost as great an influence as the Grange had during the previous decade. It finally drifted into the Populist Party, which comprised the greatest political farmer uprising in our history.

The Agricultural Wheel was organized in Arkansas in 1882, and by 1887 it claimed 500,000 members. After absorbing the Brothers of Freedom in 1885, it was united in 1888 with the Farmers' Alliance. *The Louisiana Farmers' Union,* organized in Louisiana in 1880, was reorganized in 1885, and in 1887 also united with the Farmers' Alliance. Its membership at that time is apparently not known.

The Colored Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union was organized in 1886. By 1890 it claimed a membership of 1,200,000, and had state organizations in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. At that time it was an amalgamation of the colored Wheels and Alliances. But in 1889 and 1890 it held its national meeting concurrently with the Farmers' Southern Alliance meeting and joined with this organization.

The (Northern) National Alliance was the largest of the northern farmers' organizations during the 1880's and 1890's. It was organized in 1880 and although it spread chiefly in Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota, it had thousands of members in other neighboring states, and by 1889 was said to have had 400,000 members. During that year an attempt was made to combine it with the Southern Alliance. This attempt was unsuccessful, although a number of members of the Northern Alliance joined the other organization and in 1890 some of its state organizations sent delegates to the national meeting of the Southern Farmers' Alliance.

The Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association was organized in southern Illinois in 1882 and was incorporated in 1887. At that time it claimed to have 15,000 members; by 1890 it had 1,000 "branches" (locals) in Illinois, and claimed a membership of 200,000. Although it sent representatives to the meetings of the Southern Farmers' Alliance in 1888, 1889, and 1890, it apparently never considered forming any organic union with that organization.

The Ancient Order of Gleaners, organized in Michigan in 1894, is primarily a fraternal association with locals which are called "arbors." At one time it claimed 80,000 members, but it now claims about 45,000, which are in Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, and Ohio. Its chief economic activities are buying and selling, and providing a farm market information service; it also conducts a substantial insurance business, publishes a paper (the *Gleaner Forum*), and owns its own central building in Detroit (the *Gleaners' Temple*), while its local and county organizations operate grain elevators and livestock shipping associations.

The Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union was organized in Texas in 1902. It grew very rapidly, and by the end of 1903 had spread into Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Oklahoma; by 1905 it had organizations in eleven states and by 1910, in twenty-seven. It reached its maximum membership in 1918 or 1919 when it had twenty-six state organizations as well as locals in five other states.

Organized as a fraternal and educational association, the Farmers' Union quickly engaged, however, in elaborate economic activities, operating grain elevators, mines, cotton and tobacco warehouses, cotton gins, livestock yards, packing houses, creameries, and cheese factories. It also organized fire, hail, and life insurance companies. Like all the other farm organizations that have been discussed, it declared itself nonpartisan. But it has exercised considerable political influence, and, as a matter of fact, in a few states political issues and activities have at times been its chief concern. It is today a militant economic and political organization, although in the areas where it is strongest it is still a fraternal and local community association.

The American Society of Equity was organized in Indiana in 1902, after its principles were announced previously in some local farmers' clubs in southern Illinois. By 1906 it had spread into thirteen states, chiefly those north and west of Indiana, although it was also active in Kentucky, New York, and Oklahoma. The Equity differed slightly from other farmer organizations in that it laid greater emphasis on buying than on selling activities. Moreover, it was not a fraternal society, but was, rather, a purely business organization, and it has never been involved in politics. In 1908 it split, and the *Farmers' Society of Equity* was organized. After that, the original Society of Equity drifted more toward co-operative marketing activities. At one time or another it had organizations in thirty states as it devoted itself to the various phases of the farmers' economic problems in the different sections of the country – to tobacco marketing in Kentucky and Wisconsin, grain marketing in the Northwest, and livestock shipping in the Middle West. In 1908 it organized the *Equity Cooperative Exchange* (which until 1915 was located at St. Paul, Minnesota) for the purpose of securing profitable prices, distributing products, operating a crop-reporting service and storage plants, and offering protection against false grading; and ever since 1915 this Exchange has been the heart of the Society, which since 1926, has been taken over almost completely by the Farmers' Union.

The Farmers' Equity Union was organized in 1910, and is, like the Society of Equity, purely a business organization. It has no state or county organizations, and all of its local or centralized organizations are business units which carry on marketing activities for their members. There are 156 local Equity Union exchanges located in ten different states, with Ohio, which has 47, leading. These exchanges both buy and sell for their members, but their chief concern is the operation of grain elevators, stores, and produce concerns. The national association, with headquarters at Greenville, Illinois, is the organizing and educational agency of the Union. Membership in the national organization is purely voluntary while in the locals it is limited to the farmers who buy stock in the local Equity business enterprises. The purpose of the Equity Union is to eliminate marketing machinery as much as possible, returning to its members the savings thus effected. It usually pays a dividend of only 3 to 5 per cent on the capital stock subscribed by its members, since it prefers that they receive their greater gain from patronage dividends.

The American Farm Bureau Federation was organized in 1920 as a federation of state Farm Bureaus. The first local Bureau was organized in

Broome County, New York, in 1911, and the first state Bureau, in West Virginia in 1915. An organization similar to that in Broome County was started in Pettis County, Missouri at about the same time, and both were sponsored by city chambers of commerce. The Farm Bureau had its real beginning, however, in 1913 when at a county-wide mass meeting the farmers of Broome County took over the existing organization. Also in that year, West Virginia required farmers to join the Farm Bureau and pay a membership fee of $1.00 before they could be supplied with a county agent. New York State made the same provision the following year.

The Farm Bureau is a local association of rural people, with the family the unit of membership. It attempts to include within the scope of its activities every phase of agriculture and of rural life. In some states – for example, Iowa – there are local neighborhood clubs and also township, county, and state organizations, the latter being a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation. The full scheme of organization and operation, worked out in detail, is as follows: The local community or township Farm Bureau, which has its own officers, committees, and projects, often serves as a community social club in addition to its role as an agricultural production and economic organization. The county Farm Bureau is both a "mass meeting" and a "delegate" organization, for its executive committee may be composed of the chairmen of the township locals, but there is at least one general mass meeting each year which is open to all the members. The state Farm Bureau is composed of delegates from the county Bureaus. It usually provides a number of specialized services through the county Bureaus, and also holds an annual meeting in which anything connected with agriculture may be discussed. In addition, it has a home and community committee which is in reality the women's division of the organization.

The Nonpartisan League, one of the most militant farmers' organizations in recent times, began in North Dakota in 1915 and six months later had 20,000 members in that state. It eventually spread into twelve other states and gained a membership of 234,659, all of whom were farmers. While its purposes were purely political, it arose as a result of economic conditions, primarily as the farmers' protest against bad marketing conditions. It gained control of the state government in North Dakota by persuading the farmers there to vote on a nonpartisan basis for the candidates who pledged their loyalty and support to the issues in which the farmers were interested. As a result of its activities, the legislature of that state in 1917 passed twelve laws that struck directly and drastically at conditions and agencies that the farmers intended to reform, and seventeen other similar laws were passed in 1919. The League's success in North Dakota accounts for its spread into twelve other states, chiefly those in the Northwest. But it has now been practically eliminated as an organization because of the failure of some of its business projects, its seeming alliance with radical labor elements, and a concrete and well-organized fight that has been made against it.

The Farmers' Holiday Association arose at the beginning of the 1929 depression. It developed into one of the most violent farmers' uprisings since Shays' Rebellion. It operated chiefly in the Middlewest and remained in existence for only a few years.

Today the Grange has more members than it has had at any time in its eighty years of continued existence, and it is the largest farmers' organization in the United States, while the Farmers' Alliance and its associated organizations are no longer in existence. During the past twenty-five years the Farmers' Union has lost many members in the South, but it is quite active in Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Colorado, and very strong in the Dakotas and the Northwest. It is of real service to farmers both in the purchasing of consumption goods and operating products for its thousands of members and in the successful marketing of agricultural produce in such central outlets as Omaha, St. Joseph, Sioux City, and Chicago. The American Society of Equity has followed several different courses. In Iowa, by mutual agreement on the part of the state officers of the two organizations, it joined the Farmers' Union in 1924. Since 1926 the Equities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and the Northwest have been doing likewise, and the Farmers' Society of Equity is no longer in existence as a national organization. The Farmers' Equity Union, which is making steady progress, has kept to one line of endeavor, namely, operating locals and such centralized exchanges as are essential to the locals. The Farm Bureau, which was organized to facilitate demonstrations of improved production methods, has claimed from the very first that its primary purpose was to promote every aspect of rural life, social welfare, agricultural production, and economic organization and efficiency. As soon as it became state- and nation-wide, however, it began to exert an influence in economic and political fields. Locally it has consistently emphasized production and, in some states, a well-rounded community; but nationally it has chiefly emphasized great economic issues and projects. The Nonpartisan League and all the other farmer organizations whose aims have been avowedly political have more or less disintegrated. On the whole, however, their members or former members are making their demands quite clearly known with some effectiveness. The Farmer-Labor Party, the Farmer-Labor Union, the remnants of the Nonpartisan League, the Western Progressive Farmers, and the Farmers' Union undoubtedly made up a large proportion of the farmers who voted for the La Follette electors in the presidential campaign of 1924.

Regardless of its purpose or creed, each farmer organization has sooner or later become concerned with the price, market, and credit problems and adjustments that confront farming today. The expansion and growing membership of these organizations have been based on faith that the modes of attack proposed by them will bring some solution to these problems.

Every farmer organization discussed in this chapter has established agricultural co-operative marketing associations. During the early days of the Grange, the Alliance, the Farmers' Union, and the Equity, co-operative buying was emphasized more than co-operative selling, and considerable, if sporadic, progress was made in establishing co-operative stores and making purchasing arrangements. As each organization gained strength, however, it was the co-operative marketing of farm products that became its most important project. Today the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and the Farmers' Union are this country's most outstanding and militant supporters of the agricultural co-operative movement. In 1876 the Grange actually exported wheat, and in the 1880's the Farmers' Alliance exported cotton and operated tobacco warehouses. The co-operative association for the sale of grain organized by the American Society of Equity was, prior to 1920, the largest in the country. This Society was also especially prominent in the early movement concerning livestock shipping and, with the Farmers' Union, sponsored the earliest attempts at the co-operative marketing of tobacco. The Farmers' Union, which not only operated many cotton yards but also exported cotton, is now very successfully operating livestock commission agencies in our great central markets. The Farmers' Equity Union has been successful in marketing wheat and eggs; the Gleaners provided a rather extensive market information service during its early history; the Nonpartisan League owned and operated both local and terminal grain elevators; and the American Farm Bureau has sponsored some of our great wheat, livestock, dairy, fruit, and vegetable co-operatives. In addition to the support given these activities by the national organizations, a number of state and local branches have sponsored local, county, and state marketing and shipping organizations.

These general farm organizations, with their educational and promotional programs, have played a large part in the development of co-operative attitudes throughout the world. It is probably true that although these organizations cannot claim the sole honor of having developed co-operative marketing, and although they have not confined their activities exclusively to fostering this form of marketing, they have during the past fifty years accomplished to some degree the major objective of their common purpose — a partial adjustment to the market and price system.

The co-operatives are today a quiet element in the farmers' movement, and they increase their volume of business without much vocalizing. If and when farmers' interests are threatened, however, they join with other organizations to wield political influence. Their achievements represent the consistent long-time accomplishments of the farmers' movement.

The Farmers' Movement and the Public

A movement is a specific type of social phenomenon, for as we have said, it is a steady attempt on the part of a large group in a given society to effect a harmony of maladjusted economic or social factors or conditions. A movement is likely to attack commonly accepted economic, social, or political arrangements as well as the accepted ways of thinking about them. The great majority of economic and social maladjustments are remedied in piecemeal fashion, if at all. If they affect only scattered individuals, they may be — and often are — disregarded; if they affect only a few, highly localized people, they are remedied by local community action. If they affect a relatively small but widespread section of the population, or if they are of long standing, these inequities are most often considered natural or inevitable.

But when they are persistent and affect a large section of the population, then they are usually attacked. In a dynamic and fairly democratic society they must be attacked; even if the society is not democratic some effort is generally made toward correcting them.

The farmer movement took root early in this country because agriculture became commercial at an early time, but the agricultural revolution did not appear here in all of its phases until the 1850's, and it was after the Civil War that it came with a rush. The Granger movement followed closely upon the postwar deflation of agricultural prices, and it constituted the farmers' first well-organized attack upon the problem of prices and markets. Since then one farmers' organization after another has arisen.

Psychologically, a movement usually takes a long time to develop and gathers momentum slowly, but at its high tide it rushes with headlong fervor, sometimes with mob fury. The Grange, for example, moved slowly for four years and then suddenly seemed to catch fire. At the end of 1871, after two years of incubation and another two of actual propagation, it had 161 subordinate Granges, or community locals; in 1872 it added 1,105; in 1873 it increased by 8,568 and during the first three months in 1874 it gained over 2,000 a month. The Alliance developed similarly, as did the Farmers' Union, the Nonpartisan League, the Farm Bureau, and several large co-operative marketing organizations.

The causes of the origin, growth, and decline of a specific part of any movement are illuminated if one correlates the cycle of that part of the movement with other cultural trends, such as those taking place in the geographic, economic, political, religious and, possibly, the ethnic factors. Since their common object is the correction of what are generally considered widespread economic and social maladjustments, there is both similarity and difference between movements, revolutions, and revolts. There is a difference between the peasant revolts of ancient and medieval times and the modern farmer movements — a difference that can probably be explained in terms of their different cultural *milieux*. In a dynamic or so-called democratic society improvements can be effected that could be gained only by revolt in a static or so-called autocratic and feudal society. Except for the night riders among the Kentucky and other tobacco growers, American farmers have attempted to correct their maladjustments peaceably and through organizations; it is the combined history of these organizational activities that we have called the farmers' movement.

The advent of commercial agriculture and the forcing of the market and price regime upon practically every farmer have given homogeneity and unity to the farm people of the United States. Thus something approaching the technique of a public has developed among farmers, and the farmers' movement has thereby developed and expanded. It probably will continue to do so until the maladjustments in the market and price system, in the standard of living, and in social status are remedied.

As a matter of fact, farmers have always constituted a power public in American life. The first great spokesman for agrarianism was Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson's election constituted a revolt of frontiersmen against the industrial East. Although there has never been what could be called an agrarian party in the United States, there have been "third parties" whose chief adherents were farmers and there have been periods when the problems of farmers have been the dominant national political issues. It was in the 17th Century that the Virginia and Maryland tobacco growers revolted against the market economy, and Shays' Rebellion was a farmer revolt against debts. But it was not until after the Civil War that farmer organizations became strong enough to exercise powerful political influence. It is true that thousands of the farmers who participated in the so-called Granger Revolt in the 1870's were not members of the Grange, but the Grange was, in a way, the mouthpiece of that revolt. The upheaval carried over into the Greenback party and into almost a dozen "Antimonopoly," "Independent," and "Reform" parties, which elected state officials and congressmen. The greatest upheaval came in the late 1880's and early 1890's with the development of the Populist Party, which was a direct outgrowth of the powerful Farmers' Alliance. In fact, the "Populist Revolt" ranks among the great political episodes in American history.

All during the 1920's and early 1930's the fight for Equality for Agriculture was a major national economic and political issue, and it was the occasion for the organization of the "Agricultural Bloc," which not only operated with precision and power in both houses of Congress but also mobilized a farmers' public including as adherents thousands of influential persons who were not themselves farmers. Farmers' publics have always been developed according to a pattern that can be generalized, so that although the specific events that constitute their mobilization have varied, the pattern of events that took place in the fight for Equality for Agriculture will serve to illustrate the ways in which publics rise to power and decline. First, a need was felt for adjustments of some kind, and there was a period of about three years during which numerous trial and error attempts were made by farmers' groups, the press, the President, and Congress to define the issues. During this period, too, the older farm organizations were repeating their already announced stands on agricultural questions, politicians were offering old patented remedies, and college men and Department of Agriculture officials were trying to channel and guide the militant farmers. Next came a clear formulation of the issue in terms of a slogan, "Equality for Agriculture," which was sufficiently broad to encompass nearly all the demands of all groups, but at the same time sufficiently concrete to be formulated into a legislative proposal. This step was followed by a series of trades and compromises in terms of amendments until the legislative proposal was satisfactory to most of the farming areas of the nation. The fourth phase saw the defeat of the legislative proposal. But the absence of alternative proposals that would be acceptable led to an intensification and spread of public support for the amended bill. Then came success whereby the bill was passed as a result of the widespread and effective political pressure that was exercised by farmers and their numerous friends. Finally there was a shift in public issues which forestalled a test of strength in which a political election would have hinged on the old issue, so that as a consequence, the public focus turned from farm relief and the farmer public was for the moment dissipated.

During the periods of their greatest unity as a public, the farmers operate in accordance with the typical techniques displayed by all publics. They move upon a minimum of analysis and a maximum of slogans and shibboleths. Songs, poems, symbols, trade marks, slogans, shibboleths, and trite sayings are techniques of publics in general, and they have played their part in the operation of farmer publics. Many people of today remember the phrase and even the song itself that was current during the Populist period: "The farmer is the man who feeds them all"; and everyone is familiar with the slogan that was popular from 1921 to 1930: "Equality for Agriculture." The same motif, weaving together the ideas of these two slogans, has run through the farmers' movement from the Granger era of the 1870's to the present. Such techniques are especially valuable as a means of creating class consciousness and morale; but they have an even greater value as a means of interpreting the issues to the masses, who are absolutely essential to the movement's successful development and continuance.

At its points of highest fervor or during its periods of greatest integration and homogeneity, the farmers' movement is quite definitely a public in action — a public created by the common thinking that results from some degree of identity in occupational techniques and common problems. Therefore the farmers' movement, as an aspect of American history, has actually been composed of a chain of farmers' "action publics" with each succeeding public linked, most often unconsciously, with similar action publics of the past. Each has arisen because farmers felt that in some, if not in many, ways they were not living on a parity with certain other segments of American society. Although the movement has experienced high and low tides, it has been in continuous existence almost from the beginning of American agriculture. It will probably continue in existence even though farmers become a decreasing proportion of the national population, for how they live is naturally important to them and what they produce is of great importance to others.

CHAPTER 30

SIGNIFICANT TRENDS AND DIRECTION OF CHANGE

BY CARL C. TAYLOR

The Direction and Measurement of Change

IN seeking to measure change by comparing American rural life today with what it was a century ago, one is confronted with the fact that it was not the same everywhere then and is not the same everywhere today. In a country the size of the United States the diversities are so many that a discussion of major trends must confine itself to those that are operative in all farming areas, even though they may be far more pronounced in some parts of the country than in others. Since a comparison of trends and direction of change among the major type-farming areas or belts of the country was presented in Chapter 27, in this chapter differences between regions are largely ignored and attention is focused on over-all trends.

The Lessening of Rural Isolation

Although there are remote areas of the country where isolation is greater today than it was a century ago near Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Charleston, isolation in rural areas is in general decreasing. In fact, it is even less than it was a decade ago. And yet, rural isolation has increased in some periods of our national life. For instance, it increased for most farm people during the one hundred years that followed the colonial period. Colonial farms were small and largely self-sufficient, and families generally lived close together, many of them in villages or on plantations. So, even though they had no automobiles, telephones, radios, or newspapers, they were not isolated from one another. When, however, the westward movement got under way on an extensive scale after 1790, individuals and families broke away from these compact colonial settlements and moved into the interior at hundreds and hundreds of points. Isolation increased for those who moved westward, although it of course decreased for those who remained in the older settled areas. Since those who went West were moving into isolation, this trend continued for about a century until 1890 or 1900 when there were no more frontier areas to settle.

For the past fifty years isolation has been decreasing for all farm people, and it will undoubtedly decrease at an accelerated rate in the future. Social isolation is not measured by mere distance but basically by lack of human contacts. Automobiles and good roads, newspapers and rural free delivery, telephones and radios are the instruments that have progressively reduced rural isolation. New inventions such as television and airplanes, plus other means of transportation and communication, will undoubtedly maintain this process of change that has been so pronounced during the last few decades.

Commercialization of Agriculture

Next in importance to decreasing isolation are changes in the system of farm enterprises. Relatively small, family-owned and family-operated farms were maintained by most, though not all, early American colonists. Not only were the family-owned farms relatively small, but the number of cultivated acres per farm was still smaller, for farming had to be done by hand or at best with ox power. Commercialization and mechanization of farming have tended to enlarge farms both in terms of acres and of size of business enterprise. Change in the size of the farm enterprise has not, however, been as important as changes in techniques and in the people's attitudes and value systems which have been affected by the emergence of commercial farming.

Over the decades and generations, American agriculture has made almost a complete shift from what may be called peasant farming to commercialized farming. Some students of agriculture and rural life think that the United States is the only country that has so far developed without peasant farming; others insist that the trend away from peasant farming has taken place everywhere in the world, including the United States. Neither of these points of view is wholly true, for there are still many farmers in the United States who are peasant-like in many of their characteristics. Their deepest attitudes and loyalties to farming are not those of money-making, which characterizes commercial farming. The basic psychology of the peasant farmer is conditioned by his great attachment to the land itself and his love for living, growing things. Peasant farmers live, so to speak, largely under their own vines and fig trees and feel that they are co-creators with God and nature in the production of the necessities of life. They cherish the ownership of farms and measure their worth in terms of the rural ways of life rather than in terms of monetary values. There are still millions of peasant farmers in the world, and some American farmers still have peasant attitudes. But there can be no doubt that these attitudes have steadily diminished over the decades of American agricultural evolution.

Today, tens of thousands of Americans own land that they do not farm, and hundreds of thousands of others farm land that they do not own. "Factories in the fields" are becoming more and more common; and many farms, if not most, are for sale if the purchase offers are greater than the owners' monetary evaluation of them. Farming as a complete occupation and as a way of life has steadily given way to farming as a business enterprise. There are few, if any, places in the world where this shift has been more universal and so marked as it has been in the United States during the past seventy-five years; and there are few, if any, indications that this trend will change.

From Hoe Farming to Mechanized Farming

There are still some hoe, mattock, sickle, and flail farmers in the United States, while on the other hand, there are great mechanized farming areas outside of the United States. But in no other nation in the world, except possibly for some parts of Canada, Argentina, and Russia, has there been so steady and universal a transition from man power to horsepower to motor power as in the more fertile and more level farming areas of the United States. During the period of the westward expansion, farm work progressed from the use of hand tools to the use of ox power and then to the use of horsepower implements. These included machines for practically all the major time-and-energy-consuming tasks – plows, planters, cultivators, mowers, binders, threshing machines, and so forth. The rapid shift was stimulated by easy ownership of relatively large farms located on open prairie lands and by the increase in commercialized farming. This production for the market was made feasible by the development of steamships and railroads. Farming everywhere in the United States is more mechanized today than it was a generation ago, and it will undoubtedly be still further mechanized in the future.

The increase in mechanized farming has generally been looked upon as desirable, although it has almost everywhere been accompanied by a decline in the number of farm families. Just now, however, as the mechanization of cotton production is beginning to get under way, some people are greatly concerned about what will happen. They envision farmers being pushed off the land, the closing out of some local schools and churches, and the migration of families to new areas. These are real problems, but one should not overlook the fact that there have been great problems involved in the very lack of mechanization of cotton production. That lack resulted in small farms, low incomes, child labor, poor housing, excessive soil depletion, and inadequate medical care for a great proportion of the lower-income families.

The first thing most people think of in relation to mechanization is the extent to which it has reduced irksome work, and this is important. "The plowman" less than ever before "homeward plods his weary way," and "the man with the hoe" less than ever before is "bent with the weight of the centuries." An increasing number of plowmen ride on the machines they operate, and motor power lifts more and more of the heavy loads. The monotony of oldtime farm work, however, did not consist solely of lifting heavy burdens – a great deal of it lay in the endless repetition of hand work, such as dropping seed into the ground, cultivating land with hoes and one-horse plows, and harvesting corn or cotton one ear or boll at a time, and many of these tasks had to be done in a stooping posture. Thus, the use of machines to do routine and detailed tasks has been a significant advance. It is in this kind of work that the greatest changes will probably be made in the future, for they may well extend to harvesting cotton, potatoes, sugar beets, and other crops, and to performing farmyard chores.

Mechanization has also increasingly brought conveniences and comforts previously unknown in rural life. The lessening of tedious tasks increases comfort; the installation of electric lights and water and heating systems, and the use of motor transportation, are both conveniences and positive pleasures. All these technologies, plus others, are a part of mechanization which has been adopted much more generally in rural areas in the United States than elsewhere. In Argentina, for instance, farmers use the largest farm machines made, but there are few automobiles and trucks on farms, and the residences of thousands of otherwise mechanized farms are still lighted by kerosene lamps and heated by open fires. In the United States farm mechanization is on the march, and more and more it includes all phases of farm life.

From Folk Beliefs and Practices to the Use of Science

Throughout the history of American agriculture there has been a steady shift from a trust in folk beliefs to the adoption of scientific practices in farming. To be sure, there are still some farmers who plant their crops by the signs of the moon, and there are only a few farmers who do everything by precise scientific formulae. In such countries as Denmark, Sweden, Holland, and Switzerland, a larger per cent of the farmers are avowedly more scientific than in the United States. But these facts do not diminish the significance of the increasing adoption of science in American agriculture.

Most farmers make use of science without themselves being scientists. They use seeds and breeds which geneticists have perfected and machines which stimulate – in fact, to some extent force – proper planting and cultivation. However, the farmers' knowledge of the sciences of breeding and feeding, of plant and animal diseases, and of soil conservation is steadily increasing. They usually wait a little while for new things to be tested, but the day is literally past when any large number of American farmers use superstitious beliefs to answer practical questions about farming.

The application of science to American agriculture was greatly stimulated by Jefferson, Washington, and Franklin, and by agricultural societies and fairs that early began to promote better varieties of crops and breeds of animals. During the last seventy-five years, through the establishment of agricultural colleges, experiment stations, the Agricultural Extension Service, and vocational agricultural high schools, there has been developed in the United States the greatest gamut of agricultural scientific and educational institutions and agencies to exist any place in the world. The result is that most of the rest of the world today turns to the United States for leadership in the agricultural sciences, while an increasing majority of American farmers accept science as the trusted method of agricultural improvement. This trend, too, will probably be accelerated in the future.

Shifting of Processes from Farms to Factories

In the sense that farmers no longer practice many of the artisan functions which they used to practice, farming has steadily become more specialized. Less than a hundred years ago tanning, shoe cobbling, wagonmaking and many toolmaking functions were carried on by farmers themselves – most often by a few farmers in each area who were specialists in these processes. Moreover, in 1820 two-thirds of the manufacture of clothes was done in homes, and not more than fifty years ago wheat and corn were ground chiefly in country mills, many of which were operated by farmers. It is only recently that slaughtering, the manufacture of dairy products, and considerable canning and baking have shifted from farms into factories and other processing plants.

Because of the shift of practically all major processing functions out of farm homes, the American farm family is nowhere near as self-sufficient as it was in the past. It now specializes primarily in the production of raw food and fiber products, sells these in the market, and purchases most of its finished goods. There has always been considerable protest to this loss of the farm family's self-sufficiency, and today there are strong advocates of returning many of these processes to the farm, or at least to the local rural community. To the extent that small processing machines can perform these functions by motor power or electric power, and to the extent that farmers' co-operatives may operate larger processing plants, there need not be any economic loss through the decentralization of factory processes. But the trend is in the other direction, and it will probably not be turned back easily.

The Loss of Folk Arts and Skills

With the disappearance of practically all the artisan functions from the farm and with the decline in handicrafts, many folk arts and skills of previous farmer generations are being lost. Most farmers are still capable of semiskilled carpentry and blacksmithing, but only a few farmers in relatively few sections of the country still retain the skills of making such things as ax-handles and singletrees, and literally none of them today has competence in cobbling and coopering. The results are twofold: (1) they must depend upon making enough money out of the production of raw products to purchase many of the things that their fathers and grandfathers produced for themselves; and (2) they have lost their expertness in many things for which they still have some need in farming. There are those who believe that rural life has lost a great deal of the creativeness that was due to the close relationship between artisanry and traditional art. And they say that once farm people begin to lose their artisanry, the folk arts, which are almost altogether a creation of country people, soon begin to decline.

There is probably no way of measuring the comparative gains and losses that have resulted from the decline of folk arts and skills as against the increased knowledge of science, the increased capacity to operate highly complex machines, and such understanding as exists among farm people of electricity and motor power. There can be no doubt, however, that the American farmer is considerably less of an artist than are most peasant farmers throughout the world.

Increase in Part-time Farming

A steadily increasing number of persons make their living partly by employment in agriculture and partly by employment in nonagricultural occupations and professions. This is an interesting trend, especially in view of the fact that farmers have given up many of the processing functions that were at one time carried on by farm people. There are no precise data on the off-farm work of farmers for any period preceding 1929, but during that year 723,269 farm operators did 100 or more days of work off their farms. Ten years later 943,581 farm operators did the same amount of off-farm work. Furthermore, there are many farm persons other than operators who do off-farm work, so that counting both operators and others there were 1,318,000 farm persons who had part-time employment in off-farm work in April 1930, and in April 1946 there were 3,050,000. In addition there were, of course, many farm operators and other farm persons who did off-farm work amounting to less than 100 days, while there were also many urban dwellers who did some or a great deal of farm work. Whether off-farm work is custom work done on other farms with large and expensive machinery, or whether it is part-time agricultural and part-time industrial work, the fact seems to be that operating a farm is something less than a full-time occupation for an increasing number of farmers. In New England, New York, and New Jersey, and to a lesser extent in some other sections of the country, there is an increasing number of what may be called rural residents living on farms. Some of them are retired farmers, some are retired business men and industrialists, and some carry on part-time farming. In tourist and recreation places there are also a great many people who operate tourist homes or camps located in farm areas.

These combined trends have gone so far that only in the hearts of such major farming regions as the cotton, corn, and wheat belts are such phenomena not readily observable. Even in the range-livestock areas "dude ranches" furnish recreation for nonfarm people. But to describe all these trends as a shift towards part-time farming is of course not a good way to cover them. The change is actually that the occupation of farming is steadily diminishing as the total concern of farm people.

Decreasing Proportion of Population in Rural Areas and on Farms

For at least a hundred and twenty-five years there has been a relative decline in the proportion of people who live in rural areas. In 1820 over nine-tenths of all the people in the United States lived outside of cities and towns of 2,500 population, whereas in 1946 less than two-fifths did so. The proportion of the nation's population living on farms also decreased, although census figures are not available on the farm population for the earlier decades. Still, between 1910 and 1946 the proportion of the nation's population living on farms decreased from over a third to less than one-fifth. In terms of farm production, the United States is still the greatest agricultural nation in the world, but it has become such a great industrial and commercial nation that it is no longer predominantly agricultural.

When about 1890 farm people and public leaders became aware of the movement of population from farms to towns and cities, there was considerable concern about the "depletion of the countryside." There are still those who deplore this movement. It should be apparent, however, that such a population shift is an inevitable result of the increasing mechanization of farming, which decreases the need for man power on farms, and of the increasing employment available in other occupations and professions. Thus, between 1930 and 1940 there was a net loss, through migration from farms, of approximately 1,200,000 farm youth between the ages of 15 and 20 years.

There is cause for concern about the fact that many youths born and reared on farms move to cities without adequate training to participate successfully in industrial and commercial occupations. There is also cause for concern about the fact that many farm families are living on farms of inadequate size or on submarginal lands which make it impossible for them to compete successfully with mechanized, large-scale farmers. Because this trend in population movement will probably continue steadily, there is every reason for vocational schools in agricultural areas to train farm youth for nonagricultural as well as for agricultural occupations, and for families living on inadequate farms or submarginal lands to be assisted to migrate successfully.

Decline in the Operation of the Agricultural Ladder

For many generations it was comparatively easy for a young man to start as an agricultural wage worker and move into farm ownership either directly or by climbing the agricultural ladder from hired man to tenant to owner. Today only a relatively small proportion of those who start their occupational careers as hired farm laborers ever become owners of farms. In fact, data are available to show that from 1880 to 1935 an increasing number of farmers were stalled on the tenancy rung of this ladder. The majority of others who started as hired men on farms during this period apparently moved out of agriculture altogether.

Data are not available to show how many or what per cent of those who a generation ago started in agriculture as hired laborers have shifted out of agriculture, have become tenants or owners, or still remain hired men. Practically all studies of the agricultural ladder show only that a given per cent of present owners and tenants were at one time hired farm laborers; they do not show what per cent of those who started as farm laborers at any given time or place later became farm owners. Nevertheless, a number of studies indicate that there is a tendency for sons of farm owners to become owners, whereas this is not so for sons of tenants, much less for sons of farm laborers. Because of the absence of precise data on the agricultural ladder, one is probably right in questioning whether that ladder worked as well in the past as is generally believed. Still, it did undoubtedly work much better during the period when agriculture was expanding and lands were relatively cheap than it has in recent decades.

There are a number of factors that will probably keep the agricultural ladder, as it is conceived in American tradition, from operating anywhere near effectively in the future. The capital investment that is required to become a farm owner or even a substantial farm tenant is now so great in areas where a good living can be made on a farm that this capital cannot be supplied by savings accumulated through wage work in agriculture. In fact, it is today almost impossible for a person to start as a farm hired hand and ultimately become the owner of a good farm. A young man may begin by doing some farm labor for hire, but unless he receives financial assistance he will probably never be able to buy a farm except in an extraordinarily poor land area where it is difficult to earn a living by farming.

Declining Status of Hired Farm Workers

In the decades since the passing of the frontier, the economic and social status of hired farm workers has steadily declined. With the specialization of production, the farmers' degree of dependence on hired labor has increased, particularly in the areas where seasonal farming operations have not been mechanized. Yet the tradition still lingers that the average farm laborer is only temporarily on the bottom rung of the agricultural ladder and that he will in due time either move up the ladder, through tenancy, into ownership or move out of the agricultural labor group into some other permanent occupation or profession. Instead, through the sifting process of cityward migration and the decline in the operation of the agricultural ladder, an increasing proportion of those who make up the hired farm labor force has come to be those who are unable to move into other lines of employment.

This trend is due to a number of causes. Specialization in agricultural production, plus mechanization, have increased the demand for seasonal laborers, but these seasonal workers cannot find full-time employment in agriculture. Moreover, improved means of communication have made it possible for both farm and urban workers to know of alternative opportunities for employment, and improved means of transportation have made it possible for them to move from job to job. The migration of people out of the "Dust Bowl" during the early 1930's, the great movement of workers from farms to factories during the war, and the approaching exodus of people from Southern farms as the mechanization of cotton farming increases are only dramatic manifestations of the less obvious operation of the same trend. It is unfortunate that the relatively long-time operation of the trend has not been recognized.

To the extent that the factors causing the trend will accelerate, the status of many agricultural hired workers will continue to decline. They will do arduous labor for lower wages than industrial workers, have little protection through social legislation, and lack the advantages of home and community life, for their economic, social, and sometimes citizenship status is determined by their residual position in the labor market. At the present time the trend continues partly because its social significance is not recognized and partly because the workers involved are neither organized nor vocal. Yet they constitute the most disadvantaged class in agriculture and so far have not received the welfare benefits that social legislation has provided for many others whose plight, though more obvious, is not as desperate as theirs.

Rising Levels and Standards of Living

As a result, or perhaps concomitant with other major trends in agriculture and rural life, there has been a general rise in the level of living of American farm operator families, both owners and tenants. Now as never before these operator families want to raise their level of living; they want up-to-date dwellings, home conveniences, more recreation, and opportunities to keep up with what is going on in the world. It takes money to do these things, and the fact that farm people have had more money than usual in recent years has caused them to make many improvements and plan for others in the future. The families who do not yet have the improvements want them all the more when they see them at their neighbors' houses, while the families who do have them develop new desires for themselves. Thus the rises in the *levels* of living of farm operator families are contributing dynamically to further rises in their *standards* of living.

This rise in levels and standards of living among farm operator families is due not so much, as is generally thought, to the fact that farm people have become urbanized, for the levels and standards of living of farm people today are far above those of urban families a century ago and above those of many urban dwellers today. It is due rather to the fact that the farmers now have contacts with the other segments of national and world culture, that farming like other business enterprises is in the market economy, and that science and invention have made their contributions to rural life as well as to urban life. As a result, farm people have been automatically stimulated to higher levels of consumption of both economic and social services.

One of the results of the higher levels and standards of living of farm people is that a steadily increasing percentage of their net annual income is used to maintain them. Furthermore, these higher levels of living compete with land purchases for the income of farm families far more strongly than they have in the past. There are those who criticize farm people for desiring and maintaining these high levels in the face of their waning possibilities of becoming farm owners. It is probably futile, however, to expect farm people now living in contact with other segments of society and participating more wholeheartedly in modern culture to be satisfied with the lower standards of living they had in earlier days, even though the result is that fewer and fewer of them will be owners of farms. The rise in levels of living has been a trend for decades, and there is little likelihood that the trend will be reversed.

Decreasing Rural-Urban Difference

As was pointed out above, rural and urban levels of living are becoming more alike not so much because rural people adopt urban methods and standards, but because farmers are becoming more closely identified with the price and market system and are in contact with many more cultural processes than they were in the past. Furthermore, many persons employed in industrial enterprises now live in the country areas, and many farm people engage in some urban employment. Even those engaged in full-time farming have an increasing number of contacts with urban life. Farm people go to town more often than they did in the past, and now that improved roads and automobiles are available they go even more often, especially to the larger towns. Moreover, electric lights, telephones, newspapers, and radios have triumphed over the physical barriers that at one time separated urban and rural people. In the face of all these trends, it is inevitable that the practices, ideas, and attitudes of both farm and urban people should become more and more similar.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate rural and urban people by census definitions. Part-time farmers and rural-nonfarm residents make up an increasing proportion of the rural population, and the gradations between them and farmers who participate also in other occupations and enterprises are relatively continuous. This is not so important, however, as the fact that all these people live together as neighbors, attend the same churches, send their children to the same schools, and continually exert a mutual influence upon each other, all of which tends to lessen differences between them.

Changing Methods of Obtaining Security

Throughout the history of the world security has probably been more definitely assured to people engaged in agriculture than to those in any other broad occupation. Indeed, in self-sufficient agriculture a degree of economic security is almost automatic, except in cases of drought, floods, and similar catastrophes. This security, however, has quite universally been purchased by the sacrifice of both material and cultural levels of living. But now that agriculture has come quite fully into the commercial world and farm people are stimulated by the same cultural desires as others, they are experiencing insecurities that did not prevail in past generations. We have pointed out that to gain ownership of a farm is more difficult than it was in the past, while to operate a mechanized and commercialized farm is far more expensive and involves a great deal more risk than operating a self-sufficient farm. Furthermore, to these inexorable economic facts must be added an equally unyielding social or psychological fact: the higher standards of living of farm people make them feel insecure if they cannot have health, education, recreation, and welfare services that were not available to previous generations of farmers.

As farm people have moved out of what sociologists call primary group relationships into secondary group relationships, they have begun to seek the methods of security that are common in other business enterprises and other segments of society. These methods consist chiefly of different types of insurance. Because of their relatively heavy financial investments they have for a long while insured their farm buildings, their crops and livestock, and, to some extent, their lives. In some other countries farmers are included in national social security programs. In the United States there is a growing recognition that this is probably their only alternative if they are to have modern social services and modern health services, and to be assured at least to a minimum degree against the unpredictable losses that result from physical catastrophes and financial depressions over which they as individual farmers have no control.

Steady Decline in Primary Types of Association

There is probably no long-term trend that is more consistent and more significant than the relative decline of primary types of association in American rural life and the relative increase of secondary types of association. Farm neighborhoods and communities still exist in practically all parts of the country, and informal and semiformal visiting, which is almost a lost art in all other segments of society, is still very prevalent in rural areas. Nevertheless, the great increase in market and other urban contacts, plus the transfer of many economic and social functions from local communities to larger areas of association and operation, have so greatly increased the farmer's secondary types of association that primary groups do not perform the role they once did in American rural life. For instance, the provision for and maintenance of schools and roads in rural areas were at one time almost completely the function of local neighborhood communities, but gradually these functions have been transferred to township, county, and sometimes state jurisdictions. Also, mutual aid social services, the care of the sick, the exchange of labor, and practically all recreation were once local neighborhood practices. They are still fairly prevalent in rural communities, but the establishment of specialized services, which are generally operated and administered by larger groups and sometimes by government jurisdiction, has shifted a considerable portion of these functions to semisecondary types of association.

Certainly this trend away from primary toward secondary types of association marks a sharp difference between American rural life and the rural life of peasant countries. While it has involved a loss of self-sufficiency in local neighborhoods and communities, and probably a loss also in the psychological self-sufficiency of rural personalities, at the same time there has been a gain in that the intelligence, and consequently the personalities, of farm people have been broadened. Moreover, not all the assets of mutual aid are lost in this transfer. Where farmers adopt co-operative techniques and organizations to handle their larger economic and social associations they are able to function in semi-big business and large community groups, while at the same time they maintain their face-to-face associations in the neighborhood "locals" of their larger co-operative associations. There are many who believe that rural life is the last bulwark of mutual aid groups, but they recognize that the rapidity and consistency with which agriculture and rural life have come to participate in the "great society" may have destroyed mutual aid attitudes more rapidly than was necessary, and that everything possible should be done to preserve these primary forms of association. Whether or not they are correct in their beliefs, there is no doubt that American rural society is becoming relatively more secular and relatively less a folk culture.

Within the fourteen major trends that have been discussed in this chapter there are many minor trends or components of trends that others might designate as major trends. In any event, all of those listed are interrelated with others. They are also related to some major economic trends which it is not primarily the role of the sociologist to analyze. It should be recognized, of course, that other sociologists will not agree that the fourteen trends discussed here are the major trends in American rural life. It is believed, however, that they do point to some significant directions of change and that each has been fairly well documented in the preceding chapters of this book.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN RURAL SOCIETY

BRUNNER, EDMUND DES.: *Immigrant Farmers and Their Children.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.; 1929.

SHANNON, FRED ALBERT: *The Farmer's Last Frontier.* New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc.; 1945.

SMITH, J. RUSSELL and PHILLIPS, M. OGDEN: *North America.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company; 1940.

TURNER, FREDERICK JACKSON: *Rise of the New West.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1906.

——: *The Frontier in American History.* New York: Henry Holt and Company; 1921.

United States Bureau of the Census: *A Century of Population Growth in the United States 1790 to 1900.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1909.

WERTENBAKER, THOMAS JEFFERSON: *The Old South; The Founding of American Civilization.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; 1942.

CHAPTER III

THE FARM HOME AND FAMILY

BURGESS, ERNEST W. and LOCKE, HARVEY J.: *The Family.* New York: American Book Company; 1945.

CALHOUN, ARTHUR W.: *A Social History of the American Family* (in three volumes). Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company; 1917.

Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies Nos. 1–6 (processed); 1941–43.

FRAZIER, E. FRANKLIN: *The Negro Family in the United States.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 1939.

GROVES, ERNEST R. and OGBURN, W. F.: *American Marriage and Family Relationships.* New York: Henry Holt and Company; 1928.

HAGOOD, MARGARET JARMAN: *Mothers of the South, Portraiture of the White Tenant Farm Woman.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1939.

LOOMIS, CHARLES P.: *Studies of Rural Social Organization in the United States, Latin America and Germany.* East Lansing, Michigan: State College Book Store; 1945. (Chapters IX and X.)

LORIMER, FRANK and OSBORN, FREDERICK: *Dynamics of Population: Social and Biological Significance of Changing Birth Rates in the United States.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1934.

Williams, James Mickel: *Our Rural Heritage: The Social Psychology of Rural Development.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1925.

CHAPTER IV

RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

Bell, Earl H.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Sublette, Kansas.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 2 (processed); 1942.

Brunner, Edmund deS.: *Village Communities.* New York: George H. Doran Company; 1927.

Kollmorgen, Walter M.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 4 (processed); 1942.

Leonard, Olen and Loomis, Charles P.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: El Cerrito, New Mexico.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 1 (processed); 1941.

Moe, Edward O. and Taylor, Carl C.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Irwin, Iowa.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 5 (processed); 1942.

Morgan, Arthur E.: *The Small Community.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1942.

Sanderson, Dwight: *The Rural Community.* Boston: Ginn & Company; 1932.

Sanderson, Dwight and Polson, Robert A.: *Rural Community Organization.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 1939.

Williams, James Mickel: *Our Rural Heritage: The Social Psychology of Rural Development.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1925.

Wilson, Warren H.: *The Evolution of the Country Community.* Second edition. Boston: The Pilgrim Press; 1923.

Wynne, Waller: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Harmony, Georgia.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 6 (processed); 1943.

Zimmerman, Carle C.: *The Changing Community.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1938.

CHAPTER V

RURAL TRADE AREAS AND VILLAGES

Brunner, Edmund deS.: *Village Communities.* New York: George H. Doran Company; 1927.

Brunner, Edmund deS., Hughes, Gwendolyn S., and Patten, Marjorie: *American Agricultural Villages.* New York: George H. Doran Company; 1927.

Brunner, Edmund deS. and Kolb, J. H.: *Rural Social Trends.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; 1933.

Brunner, Edmund deS. and Lorge, Irving: *Rural Trends in Depression Years.* New York: Columbia University Press; 1937.

Hoffer, C. R.: *Changes in the Retail and Service Facilities of Rural Trade Centers in Michigan, 1900 and 1930.* East Lansing; Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 261; 1935.

——: *A Study of Town-Country Relationships.* East Lansing: Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 181; 1928.

Kolb, J. H. and Polson, R. A.: *Trends in Town-Country Relations.* Madison, Wisconsin: Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin and the United States Department of Agriculture, co-operating, Research Bulletin 117; 1933.

Landis, Paul H.: *The Growth and Decline of South Dakota Trade Centers 1901–1933.* Brookings: South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 279; 1933.

Marshall, D. G.: "Hamlets and Villages in the United States: Their Place in the American Way of Life." *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 11, No. 2 (April 1946), pp. 159–65.

Smith, T. Lynn: *Farm Trade Centers in Louisiana 1901 to 1931.* University, Louisiana: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Agricultural Experiment Stations, Louisiana Bulletin No. 234; 1933.

——: "The Role of the Village in American Rural Society." *Rural Sociology,* Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 1942), pp. 10–21.

CHAPTER VI

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

American Library Association: *The Equal Chance.* Chicago; 1943.

Federal Security Agency, U. S. Office of Education: *Vocational Education in the Years Ahead.* Washington, D. C.: Vocational Division Bulletin No. 234, General Series No. 7; 1945.

Kolb, J. H. and Brunner, Edmund deS.: *A Study of Rural Society.* Third edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1946. (Chapters 18, 19, and 20.)

National Education Association of the United States: *A Policy for Rural Education in the United States.* Washington, D. C.; 1940.

——: *The White House Conference on Rural Education. October 3, 4, and 5, 1944.* Washington, D. C.

Norton, John K. and Lawler, Eugene S.: *Unfinished Business in American Education.* Washington, D. C.: National Education Association and the American Council on Education; 1946.

Works, George A. and Lesser, Simon O.: *Rural America Today—Its Schools and Community Life.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 1942.

CHAPTER VII

THE RURAL CHURCH AND RELIGION

Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America: *Churching the Community Cooperatively.* New York; 1945.

Kolb, J. H. and Brunner, Edmund deS.: *A Study of Rural Society.* Third edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1946. (Chapter 21.)

Mather, William G.: *The Rural Churches of Allegany County.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 587; 1934.

Nelson, Lowry: *Red Wing Churches during the War.* Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, The Community Basis for Postwar Planning, No. 7; 1946.

Rich, Mark: *The Larger Parish.* Ithaca: New York State College of Agriculture, Bulletin 408; 1939.

Sanderson, Dwight: *Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 1942. (Chapter 15.)

SMITH, ROCKWELL C.: *The Church in Our Town.* Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press; 1945.

SNEED, MELVIN W. and ENSMINGER, DOUGLAS: *The Rural Church in Missouri.* Columbia: The University of Missouri, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 225; 1935.

CHAPTER VIII

RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ANDERSON, WILLIAM: *The Units of Government in the United States.* Chicago: Public Administration Service, No. 42; 1934.

FAIRLIE, J. A. and KNEIER, C. M.: *County Government and Administration.* New York: The Century Co.; 1930.

LANCASTER, LANE W.: *Government in Rural America.* New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.; 1937.

MANNY, THEODORE B.: *Rural Municipalities.* New York: The Century Co.; 1930.

United States Bureau of the Census: *Governmental Finances in the United States, 1942.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1945.

WASSON, C. R. and SANDERSON, DWIGHT: *Relation of Community Areas to Town Government in the State of New York.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 555; 1933.

CHAPTER IX

RURAL HEALTH

ALMACK, RONALD B.: *The Rural Health Facilities of Lewis County, Missouri.* Columbia: The University of Missouri, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 365; 1943.

DORN, HAROLD F.: "The Relative Amount of Ill Health in Rural and Urban Communities." *Public Health Reports,* Vol. 53, No. 28 (July 1938), pp. 1181–95.

——: "Rural Health and Public Health Programs." *Rural Sociology,* Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 1942), pp. 23–32.

Farm Foundation: *Medical Care and Health Services for Rural People.* Chicago; 1944.

GOLDMANN, FRANZ: "Medical Care for Farmers." *Medical Care,* Vol. 3, No. 1 (February 1943), pp. 19–35.

KAUFMAN, HAROLD F. and MORSE, WARREN W.: *Illness in Rural Missouri.* Columbia: The University of Missouri, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 391; 1945.

LONGMORE, T. WILSON, ENSMINGER, DOUGLAS, and TAYLOR, CARL C.: *The Experimental Health Program of the United States Department of Agriculture.* Washington, D. C.: Subcommittee on Wartime Health and Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, United States Senate, 79th Congress, 2d Session, Subcommittee Monograph No. 1; 1946.

MOTT, FREDERICK D. and ROEMER, MILTON I.: *Rural Health and Medical Care.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; 1948.

PENNOCK, JEAN L. and ANGLE, GRACE M.: *What Farm Families Spend for Medical Care.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 561; 1945.

CHAPTER X

RURAL WELFARE

BRECKINRIDGE, SOPHONISBA P.: *Public Welfare Administration in the United States.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 1927.

Federal Security Agency, Social Security Administration: *Annual Report of the Federal Security Agency, Section One, Social Security Administration, for the Fiscal Year 1947.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1948.

MANGUS, A. R.: *Changing Aspects of Rural Relief.* Washington, D. C.: Works Progress Administration, Research Monograph XIV; 1938.

ODUM, HOWARD W. and WILLARD, D. W.: *Systems of Public Welfare.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1925.

Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends: *Recent Social Trends.* One-volume edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; 1934.

Security, Work, and Relief Policies. Washington, D. C.: Report of the Committee on Long-Range Work and Relief Policies to the National Resources Planning Board, 78th Congress, 1st Session, House Document No. 128, Part 3; 1943.

CHAPTER XI

RURAL RECREATION AND ART

ARVOLD, ALFRED G.: *The Little Country Theater.* Fargo, North Dakota: Published by Alfred G. Arvold; 1945.

——: *The Soul and the Soil.* New York: pamphlet published by the National Recreation Association; 1916.

Bureau of Agricultural Economics: *Attitudes of Rural People Toward Radio Service.* Washington, D. C. (processed); 1946.

BURNS, C. DELISLE: *Leisure in the Modern World.* New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc.; 1932.

CURTIS, HENRY S.: *Play and Recreation for the Open Country.* New York: Ginn & Company; 1914.

KOCH, FREDERICK H.: *Carolina Folk Plays.* Three series. New York: Henry Holt & Company; 1922–1930.

——: "Toward a New Folk Theatre." Grand Forks: *Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota;* 1930.

LAMPLAND, RUTH: *Hobbies for Everybody.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1935.

MONROE, DAY, *et al.: Family Expenditures for Education, Reading, Recreation, and Tobacco.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the Work Projects Administration, Consumer Purchases Study, urban, village, and farm, Miscellaneous Publication No. 456; 1941.

PANGBURN, WEAVER WEDDELL: *Adventures in Recreation.* New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc.; 1936.

RANKIN, J. O.: *The Use of Time in Farm Homes.* Lincoln: The University of Nebraska College of Agriculture Experiment Station, Bulletin 230; 1928.

SCHULER, EDGAR A.: *Social Status and Farm Tenure – Attitudes and Social Conditions of Corn Belt and Cotton Belt Farmers.* Washington, D. C.: Farm Security Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating, Social Research Report No. IV (processed); 1938.

Steiner, Jesse Frederick: *Americans at Play.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; 1933.

Wood, Grant: *Revolt against the City.* Iowa City: Clio Press; 1935.

CHAPTER XII

RURAL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Landis, Paul H.: *Population Problems: A Cultural Interpretation.* New York: American Book Company; 1943.

Smith, T. Lynn: *Population Analysis.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; 1948. (Chapter 2.)

Truesdell, Leon E.: *Farm Population of the United States: An Analysis of the 1920 Farm Population Figures, Especially in Comparison with Urban Data, Together with a Study of the Main Economic Factors Affecting the Farm Population.* Washington, D. C.: United States Bureau of the Census, Census Monographs VI; 1926.

United States Bureau of the Census: *Current Population Reports.* See especially Series now numbered P-20 (continuation of Series P-45, P-46, P-47 and PS); and Series Census-BAE, issued in cooperation with Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

United States Bureau of the Census: Volumes of First through Sixteenth Decennial Censuses of the United States.

Vance, Rupert B.: *All These People.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1945.

CHAPTER XIII

DYNAMICS OF RURAL POPULATION

Hamilton, C. Horace: *Rural-Urban Migration in North Carolina 1920 to 1930.* Raleigh: Agricultural Experiment Station, North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering and North Carolina Department of Agriculture, cooperating, Bulletin No. 295; 1934.

Hauser, Philip M. and Taeuber, Conrad: "The Changing Population of the United States." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 237 (January 1945), pp. 12–21.

Lively, C. E. and Taeuber, Conrad: *Rural Migration in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: Works Progress Administration, Research Monograph XIX; 1939.

Lorimer, Frank and Osborn, Frederick: *Dynamics of Population: Social and Biological Significance of Changing Birth Rates in the United States.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1934.

Manny, Theodore B. and Galpin, Charles J.: *Interstate Migrations among the Native White Population as Indicated by Differences between State of Birth and State of Residence.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics; 1934.

National Resources Committee: *The Problems of a Changing Population.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1938.

Thompson, Warren S.: *Research Memorandum on Internal Migration in the Depression.* New York: Social Science Research Council, Bulletin 30; 1937.

Thornthwaite, C. Warren: *Internal Migration in the United States.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1934.

United States Bureau of the Census: *Population: Differential Fertility, 1940 and 1910, Standardized Fertility Rates and Reproduction Rates.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1944.

——: *Current Population Reports.* Series P-20, No. 8, *Differential Fertility: June 1946.* Washington, D. C.; 1947.

CHAPTER XIV

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS OF RURAL POPULATION

Carson, Daniel: "Industrial Composition of Manpower in the United States." Paper Presented at the Conference on Research in Income and Wealth (November 1946). To be published in *Proceedings.*

Durand, John D.: *The Labor Force in the United States, 1890–1960.* New York: Social Science Research Council; 1948.

Edwards, Alba M.: *Population: Comparative Occupation Statistics for the United States, 1870 to 1940.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of the Census; 1943.

Fabricant, Solomon: "The Changing Industrial Distribution of Gainful Workers: Some Comments on the American Decennial Statistics for 1820–1940." Paper Presented at the Conference on Research in Income and Wealth (November 1946). To be published in *Proceedings.*

Kolb, J. H. and Brunner, Edmund deS.: *A Study of Rural Society.* Third edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1946. (Chapters 6, 7, and 8.)

National Resources Committee: *The Problems of a Changing Population.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1938.

Whelpton, P. K.: "Occupational Groups in the United States, 1820–1920." *Journal of the American Statistical Association,* Vol. 21, New Series, No. 155 (September 1926), pp. 335–43.

CHAPTER XV

LANDOWNERS AND TENANTS

Black, John D., editor: *Research in Agricultural Land Tenure.* New York: Social Science Research Council, Bulletin No. 21; 1933.

Caribbean Commission: *Caribbean Land Tenure Symposium.* Washington, D. C.: Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of the Caribbean Research Council; 1946.

Gray, L. C., *et al.*: "Farm Ownership and Tenancy." *United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook* (1923), pp. 507–600.

Harris, Marshall: *Compensation as a Means of Improving the Farm Tenure System.* Washington, D. C.: United States Resettlement Administration, Land Use Planning Publication 14 (mimeographed); 1937.

Hibbard, Benjamin H.: *A History of the Public Land Policies.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1924.

Inter-Bureau Committee on Postwar Agricultural Programs: *Farm Opportunities? Prospects . . . , Problems . . . , Policies. . . .* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (mimeographed); 1946.

Mead, Elwood: "Land Settlement." *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* Vol. 9 (1933), pp. 53–64.

National Resources Committee: *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1937.

Stone, A. H.: "The Negro and Agricultural Development." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 35, No. 1 (1910), pp. 8–15.

Turner, H. A.: *A Graphic Summary of Farm Tenure.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 261; 1936.

Wickens, D. L.: *Farmer Bankruptcies, 1898–1935.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Circular 414; 1936.

Woofter, T. J., Jr.: *Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation.* Washington, D. C.: Works Progress Administration, Research Monograph V; 1936.

CHAPTER XVI

FARM LABORERS

Adams, Thomas M.: *Prices Paid by Vermont Farmers for Goods and Services and Received by Them for Farm Products, 1790–1940; Wages of Vermont Farm Labor, 1780–1940.* Burlington: Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 507; 1944.

Black, John D. *et al.: Farm Management.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1947. (Part One and Chapters 25 and 26 of Part Four.)

Ducoff, Louis J.: *Wages of Agricultural Labor in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin 895; 1945.

Ducoff, Louis J. and Hagood, Margaret Jarman: *Employment and Wages of the Hired Farm Working Force in 1945: with Special Reference to Its Population Composition.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (mimeographed); 1946.

Ham, William T.: "Status of Agricultural Labor." *Law and Contemporary Problems,* Vol. 4, No. 4 (October 1937), pp. 559–72.

Jamieson, Stuart: *Labor Unionism in American Agriculture.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 836; 1945.

McWilliams, Carey: *Ill Fares the Land.* Boston: Little, Brown & Company; 1942.

Schwartz, Harry: *Seasonal Farm Labor in the United States with Special Reference to Hired Workers in Fruit and Vegetable and Sugar-Beet Production.* New York: Columbia University Press; 1945.

Shugg, Roger W.: *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers during Slavery and After, 1840–1875.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press; 1939.

Surveys of Wages and Wage Rates in Agriculture. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Reports Nos. 1–20 (mimeographed); 1945–47. (See especially Reports nos. 4, 7, 16, 18, and 19.)

Taylor, Carl C., Ducoff, Louis J., and Hagood, Margaret Jarman: *Trends in the Tenure Status of Farm Workers in the United States since 1880.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (processed); 1948.

Taylor, Carl C., Wheeler, Helen W., and Kirkpatrick, E. L.: *Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture.* Washington, D. C.: Farm Security Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating, Social Research Report No. VIII (processed); 1938.

Taylor, Paul S.: *An American-Mexican Frontier: Nueces County, Texas.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1934.

CHAPTER XVII

LEVELS AND STANDARDS OF LIVING

American Public Health Association, Committee on the Hygiene of Housing: "Basic Principles of Healthful Housing." *American Journal of Public Health,* Vol. 28, No. 3 (March 1938), pp. 351–72.

CHAPIN, F. STUART: *The Measurement of Social Status.* Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press; 1938.

HAGOOD, MARGARET JARMAN: *Farm Operator Family Level of Living Indexes for Counties of the United States, 1940 and 1945.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (mimeographed); 1947.

——: *Rural Level of Living Indexes for Counties of The United States, 1940.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (mimeographed); 1943.

MCKAIN, WALTER C., JR.: "The Concept of Plane of Living and the Construction of a Plane of Living Index." *Rural Sociology,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 1939), pp. 336–42.

——: "Farm-City Living Compared." *The Agricultural Situation,* Vol. 31, No. 9 (September 1947), pp. 9–10.

National Resources Committee: *Consumer Incomes in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1938.

National Resources Planning Board: *Family Expenditures in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1941.

SCHULER, EDGAR A.: *Social Status and Farm Tenure – Attitudes and Social Conditions of Corn Belt and Cotton Belt Farmers.* Washington, D. C.: Farm Security Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating, Social Research Report No. IV (processed); 1938.

——: "Some Regional Variations in Levels and Standards of Living." *Rural Sociology,* Vol. 9, No. 2 (June 1944), pp. 122–41.

SCHULER, EDGAR A., MAYO, SELZ C., and MAKOVER, HENRY B., M.D.: "Measuring Unmet Needs for Medical Care: An Experiment in Method." *Rural Sociology,* Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1946), pp. 152–8.

SCHULER, EDGAR A. and SWIGER, RACHEL ROWE: *Trends in Farm Family Levels and Standards of Living.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (mimeographed); 1947.

SEWELL, WILLIAM H.: *The Construction and Standardization of a Scale for the Measurement of the Socio-Economic Status of Oklahoma Farm Families.* Stillwater: Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Technical Bulletin No. 9; 1940.

TAYLOR, CARL C., WHEELER, HELEN W., and KIRKPATRICK, E. L.: *Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture.* Washington, D. C.: Farm Security Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating, Social Research Report No. VIII (processed); 1938.

VANCE, RUPERT: *Human Factors in Cotton Culture.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1929.

ZIMMERMAN, CARLE C.: *Consumption and Standard of Living.* New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.; 1936.

CHAPTER XVIII

RURAL SOCIAL DIFFERENTIALS

Beck, P. G. and Forster, M. C.: *Six Rural Problem Areas.* Washington, D. C.: Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Research Monograph No. 1; 1935.

Bell, Earl H.: "Social Stratification in a Small Community." *Scientific Monthly,* Vol. 38, No. 2 (February 1934), pp. 156–64.

Forster, G. W.: *Impact of Technology on Southern Agriculture.* Raleigh: North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering (mimeographed); 1946.

Fryer, Lee: *The American Farmer.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1947.

Hollingshead, August B.: "Selected Characteristics of Classes in a Middle Western Community." *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 12, No. 4 (August 1947), pp. 385–96.

Kolb, J. H. and Brunner, Edmund deS.: *A Study of Rural Society.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1940.

Kollmorgen, Walter M.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 4 (processed); 1942.

Myrdal, Gunnar: *An American Dilemma.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1944.

North, C. C.: *Social Differentiation.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1926.

Raper, Arthur F. and Reid, Ira de A.: *Sharecroppers All.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1940.

Taylor, Carl C., Wheeler, Helen W., and Kirkpatrick, E. L.: *Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture.* Washington, D. C.: Farm Security Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating, Social Research Report No. VIII (processed); 1938.

Warner, W. Lloyd: "American Class and Caste." *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 42, No. 2 (September 1936), pp. 234–8.

CHAPTER XIX

RURAL CULTURE

Elliott, F. F.: *Types of Farming in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1933.

Mangus, A. R.: *Rural Regions of the United States.* Washington, D. C.: Work Projects Administration; 1940.

National Resources Committee: *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1935.

Odum, Howard W.; Jocher, Katharine; Vance, Rupert B.; Ogburn, William F.; Johnson, Charles S.; *et al.:* "In Search of the Regional Balance of America." *Social Forces,* Vol. 23, No. 3 (March 1945), pp. 245–404.

Odum, Howard W. and Moore, Harry E.: *American Regionalism.* New York: Henry Holt and Company; 1938.

Redfield, Robert: "The Regional Aspect of Culture." *Publications of The American Sociological Society,* Vol. 34 (May 1930), pp. 33–41.

Vance, Rupert B.: "Concept of the Region." *Social Forces,* Vol. 8, No. 2 (December 1929), pp. 202–18.

Wissler, Clark: "The Culture Area Concept as a Research Lead." *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 33 (May 1928), pp. 894–900.

Woofter, T. J., Jr.: "Rural Regions of the United States." A map prepared from A. R. Mangus' *Rural Regions of the United States.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics; 1940.

CHAPTER XX

THE COTTON BELT

Dodd, William E.: *The Cotton Kingdom, A Chronicle of the Old South.* New Haven; Yale University Press; 1919.

Holley, W. C., Winston, Ellen, and Woofter, T. J., Jr.: *The Plantation South 1934–1937.* Washington, D. C.: Work Projects Administration, Research Monograph XXII; 1940.

Johnson, C. S., Embree, E. R., and Alexander, W. W.: *The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1935.

Murchison, C. T.: *King Cotton Is Sick.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1930.

Odum, Howard W.: *Southern Regions of the United States.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1936.

Raper, Arthur F.: *Machines in the Cotton Fields.* Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Council; 1946.

Raper, Arthur F. and Reid, Ira de A.: *Sharecroppers All.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1941.

Thompson, E. T.: "Population Expansion and the Plantation System." *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 41, No. 3 (November 1935), pp. 314–26.

Vance, Rupert B.: *All These People.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1945.

——: *Human Factors in Cotton Culture.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1929.

——: *Human Geography of the South.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1932.

Woofter, T. J., Jr.: *Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation.* Washington, D. C.: Works Progress Administration, Research Monograph V; 1936.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CORN BELT

Baker, Oliver E.: "Agricultural Regions of North America – The Corn Belt." *Economic Geography,* Vol. 3, No. 4 (October 1927), pp. 447–65.

Faris, John T.: *Seeing the Middle West.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company; 1923.

Flanagan, John Theodore, editor: *America Is West: An Anthology of Middlewestern Life and Literature.* Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press; 1945.

Fox, Dixon Ryan: *Sources of Culture in the Middle West.* New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc.; 1934.

Havighurst, Walter: *Upper Mississippi: A Wilderness Saga.* New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc.; 1937.

Hutton, Graham: *Midwest at Noon.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 1946.

Larson, Laurence M.: *The Changing West.* Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association; 1937.

Moe, Edward O. and Taylor, Carl C.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Irwin, Iowa.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 5 (processed); 1942.

Moore, Arthur: *The Farmer and the Rest of Us.* Boston: Little, Brown & Company; 1945.

Smith, J. Russell and Phillips, M. Ogden: *North America.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company; 1940. (Especially Chapter 16.)

CHAPTER XXII

THE WHEAT AREAS

Bell, Earl H.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Sublette, Kansas.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 2 (processed); 1942.

Cronin, Francis D. and Beers, Howard W.: *Areas of Intense Drought Distress, 1930–1936.* Washington, D. C.: Works Progress Administration, Research Series V, No. 1; 1937.

Great Plains Committee: *The Future of the Great Plains.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1936.

Rölvaag, O. E.: *Giants in the Earth.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1928.

Starch, E. A.: "Type of Farming Modifications Needed in the Great Plains." *Journal of Farm Economics,* Vol. 21, No. 1 (February 1939), pp. 114–20.

Taeuber, Conrad and Taylor, Carl C.: *The People of the Drought States.* Washington, D. C.: Works Progress Administration, Research Series V, No. 2; 1937.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RANGE–LIVESTOCK AREAS

Anderson, Anton H.: *Significance of Rural Communities in the Northern Great Plains.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics (mimeographed); 1945.

Chittenden, William Lawrence: *Ranch Verses.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; 1893.

Craig, G. H. and Loomer, Charles W.: *Collective Tenure on Grazing Land in Montana.* Bozeman: Montana State College Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 406; 1943.

Dale, Edward Everett: *The Range Cattle Industry.* Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press; 1930.

Dobie, J. Frank: *Texas and Southwestern Lore.* Austin: Texas Folklore Society; 1927.

Gilfillan, Archer B.: *Sheep.* Boston: Little, Brown & Company; 1930.

Lomax, John A.: *Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1919.

Lomax, John A. and Lomax, Alan: *Cowboy Songs.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1938.

Raine, William MacLeod and Barnes, Will C.: *Cattle.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.; 1930.

VESTAL, STANLEY: *Short Grass Country.* New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc.; 1941.

WEBB, WALTER PRESCOTT: *The Great Plains.* New York: Ginn & Company; 1931.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DAIRY AREAS

ANDERSON, W. A. and PLAMBECK, HANS: *The Social Participation of Farm Families.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Agriculture Experiment Station (mimeographed); 1943.

BROOKS, VAN WYCK: *The Flowering of New England.* New York: E. P. Dutton and Company; 1936.

CARROLL, GLADYS (HASTY): *As the Earth Turns.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1938.

FIREY, WALTER: *Social Aspects of Land Use Planning in the Country-City Fringe.* East Lansing: Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 339; 1946.

GLASGOW, ELLEN A. G.: *Barren Ground.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company; 1925.

GREENE, JOSIAH: *Not in Our Stars.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1945.

NIEDERFRANK, E. J.: *Rural Organization in a Hilltown Area of Western Massachusetts.* Madison: University of Wisconsin (unpublished); 1947.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WESTERN SPECIALTY-CROP AREAS

GARDINER, DOROTHY: *Snow Water.* New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.; 1939.

GOLDSCHMIDT, WALTER R.: *As You Sow.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company; 1947.

McKAY, ALLIS: *They Came to a River.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1941.

McWILLIAMS, CAREY: *Southern California Country.* New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc.; 1946.

MEIGS, PEVERIL: "Current Trends in California Orchards and Vineyards." *Economic Geography,* Vol. 17, No. 3 (July 1941), pp. 275–86.

MILLER, MARY (MERRILL): *First the Blade.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1938.

NELSON, LOWRY: *The Mormon Village: A Study in Social Origins.* Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Studies No. 3; 1930.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GENERAL AND SELF-SUFFICING AREAS

CAMPBELL, J. C.: *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation; 1921.

EATON, ALLEN H.: *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation; 1937.

JACKSON, G. P.: *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1933.

KEPHART, HORACE: *Our Southern Highlanders.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1922.

Ross, Malcolm: *Machine Age in the Hills.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1933.

"The Southern Appalachians." *Land Policy Review,* Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 1944).

Wilson, Charles M.: *Backwoods America.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1935.

Woofter, T. J., Jr.: "The Tennessee Basin." *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 39, No. 6 (May 1934), pp. 809–17.

CHAPTER XXVII

COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS OF MAJOR TYPE-FARMING AREAS

Baker, Oliver E.: "Agricultural Regions of the United States." *Economic Geography,* Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1926), pp. 459–93; Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1927), pp. 50–86; Vol. 3, No. 3 (July 1927), pp. 309–39; Vol. 4, No. 1 (January 1928), pp. 44–73; Vol. 4, No. 4 (October 1928), pp. 399–433; Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 1929), pp. 36–69; and Vol. 6, No. 2 (April 1930), pp. 166–90.

Elliott, F. F.: *Types of Farming in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office; 1933.

Goodsell, Wylie D., Jones, Ronald W., and Bierman, Russell W.: *Typical Family-Operated Farms 1930–45.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Farm Management 55 (processed); 1946.

Hainsworth, R. G., Baker, O. E., and Brodell, A. P.: *Seedtime and Harvest Today.* Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 485; 1942.

Odum, Howard W.: *Southern Regions of the United States.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1936.

Ratcliffe, S. C.: "Population Changes of Hamlets and Villages." *Rural Sociology,* Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 1942), pp. 318–28.

Smith, J. Russell and Phillips, M. Ogden: *North America.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company; 1940.

Vance, Rupert B.: *All These People.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1945.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FARM PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

Bean, Louis H.: *Ballot Behavior: A Study of Presidential Elections.* Introduction by Charles E. Merriam. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Public Affairs; 1940.

Bell, Earl H.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Sublette, Kansas.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 2 (processed); 1942.

Kollmorgen, Walter M.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 4 (processed); 1942.

Leonard, Olen and Loomis, Charles P.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: El Cerrito, New Mexico.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 1 (processed); 1941.

MacLeish, Kenneth and Young, Kimball: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural*

Community: Landaff, New Hampshire. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 3 (processed); 1942.

MOE, EDWARD O. and TAYLOR, CARL C.: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Irwin, Iowa.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 5 (processed); 1942.

RAPER, ARTHUR F.: *Preface to Peasantry.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; 1936.

RICE, STUART A.: *Farmers and Workers in American Politics.* New York: Columbia University, Doctoral Dissertation; 1924.

ROPER, ELMO: "The Fortune Survey." *Fortune,* Vol. 27, Nos. 3 and 4 (March and April 1943), pp. 8–16.

SCHULER, EDGAR A.: *Social Status and Farm Tenure – Attitudes and Social Conditions of Corn Belt and Cotton Belt Farmers.* Washington, D. C.: Farm Security Administration and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating, Social Research Report No. IV (processed); 1938.

TAYLOR, CARL C.: *Rural Sociology.* New York: Harper & Brothers; 1933.

——: "Attitudes of American Farmers – International and Provincial." *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 9, No. 6 (December 1944), pp. 657–64.

WEST, JAMES (pseud.): *Plainville, U.S.A.* New York: Columbia University Press; 1945.

WYNNE, WALLER: *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Harmony, Georgia.* Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies No. 6 (processed); 1943.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FARMERS' MOVEMENT AND LARGE FARMERS' ORGANIZATION

BAHMER, ROBERT H.: "The American Society of Equity." *Agricultural History,* Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 1940), pp. 33–63.

BEARD, CHARLES A. and BEARD, MARY R.: *The Rise of American Civilization.* Vol. 1, *The Agricultural Era.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1931.

BLACK, JOHN D.: "The Progress of Farm Relief." *American Economic Review,* Vol. 18, No. 2 (June 1928), pp. 252–71.

BUCK, SOLON J.: *The Granger Movement.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; 1913.

CAPPER, ARTHUR: *The Agricultural Bloc.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company; 1922.

DAVIS, CHESTER C.: "The Development of Agricultural Policy Since the End of the World War." *United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook* (1940), pp. 297–326.

FISHER, COMMODORE B.: *The Farmers' Union.* Lexington: Kentucky University Studies in Economics and Sociology, No. 2; 1920.

HICKS, JOHN D.: *The Populist Revolt.* Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press; 1931.

KILE, ORVILLE M.: *The Farm Bureau Movement.* New York: The Macmillan Company; 1921.

MCCUNE, WESLEY: *The Farm Bloc.* New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.; 1943.

STEEN, HERMAN: *Cooperative Marketing: The Golden Rule in Agriculture.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company; 1923.

WIEST, EDWARD: *Agricultural Organization in the United States.* Lexington: Kentucky University Studies in Economics and Sociology, Vol. 2; 1923.

INDEX

Adams, Thomas M., 542
Age composition, *see* Population
Agricultural Adjustment Administration, *see* Production and Marketing Administration
Agricultural Bloc, 520
Agricultural ladder, 284, 420, 528–9
Agriculture, United States Department of, 72, 107, 132, 135–6, 150, 175–6, 198–9, 201, 278–9, 508; *see also* Bureau of Agricultural Economics; Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics; Extension Service, agricultural; Farm Credit Administration; Farmers Home Administration; Forest Service, United States; Production and Marketing Administration; Rural Electrification Administration; Soil Conservation Service
Aid to dependent children, *see* Social Security Act
Alabama College, 58
Alexander, W. W., 545
Almack, Ronald B., 538
American Council on Education, 96–7
American Country Life Conference, 129, 131
American Dental Association, 167
American Farm Bureau Federation, *see* Farm Bureau Federation, American
American Institute of Public Opinion, 501, 508
American Library Association, 110–11
American Medical Association, 167, 172–3
American Public Health Association, 543
American Society of Equity, 379, 394, 510, 512, 515, 517–18
Ancient Order of Gleaners, 514, 518
Anderson, Anton H., 392, 407, 546
Anderson, W. A., 547
Anderson, William, 143, 155–6, 538
Angle, Grace M., 538
Aronovici, Carol, 337
Art: 206–13, 496; folk, 206–11, 526–7; in major type-farming areas, 412, 459–60; relationship of, and recreation, 206–11; rural life in, 211–13; social, 206–11
Arvold, Alfred G., 207–10, 539
Asheville Annual Folk Festival, 460
Assistance, public, *see* Social Security Act
Associated Farmers, 442
Attitudes: 495–509; as affected by various conditioning factors, 64, 498–500, 523–4; as part of standards and levels of living, 297, 302–4, 306–7; definition of, 500–1; in major type-farming areas, 345, 356–7, 360–3, 367–8, 377–81, 384, 394–7, 402–3, 411–12, 427–30, 443–4, 448, 458–60, 488–91, 504–7; local variations in, 504–7; on major farm issues, 507–8; peasant, 523; related to opinion, 500–4, 508–9; rural and urban, 3, 9–10, 46–7; toward specific aspects of rural life, 9, 43, 46–7, 53–4, 194–5, 495–6, 502–4; various interpretations of farmers in relation to, 495–8; *see also* Culture, Tradition

Bahmer, Robert H., 549
Baker, Oliver E., 401, 545, 548
Bankhead-Jones Tenant Purchase Act of 1937, 279–80
Barnes, Will C., 546
Bean, Louis H., 497–8, 548
Beard, Charles A., 549
Beard, Mary R., 549
Beck, P. G., 310, 544
Beers, Howard W., 546
Bell, Earl H., 314–15, 505, 536, 544, 546, 548
Bierman, Russell W., 548
Birth rates, *see* Fertility
Birth registration, 217
Blache, Vidal de la, 337
Black, John D., 541–2, 549
Blue Cross, 176, 491
Boas, Franz, 337
Borglum, Gutzon, 206
Bradford, Roark, 357
Bradshaw, Nettie P., 148, 227
Breckinridge, Sophonisba P., 539
Brodell, A. P., 548
Brooks, Van Wyck, 547

Brunner, Edmund deS., 81, 116, 119–21, 123, 151, 321, 535–7, 541, 544
Buck, Solon J., 549
Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 68, 116, 120–1, 148, 170, 196–9, 218, 223–5, 227, 240–1, 243, 248, 253, 265, 270, 272–3, 275, 283, 285, 287, 292, 298, 304–5, 332–3, 335, 340, 345, 347, 361, 364–5, 384–5, 392, 400, 414–15, 435, 446, 474–8, 504, 535, 539, 541–2
Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, 170, 299–300
Bureau of Labor Statistics, 170, 287
Bureau of Reclamation, 269
Burgess, Ernest W., 535
Burns, C. Delisle, 539
Butterfield, Kenyon L., 129

Caldwell, Erskine, 357
Calhoun, Arthur W., 535
Campbell, J. C., 547
Capper, Arthur, 549
Caribbean Commission, 541
Carnegie Institution of Washington, 20–1
Carolina Playmakers, 210
Carroll, Gladys (Hasty), 430, 547
Carson, Daniel, 541
Catholic Church, 16, 33, 48, 122–3, 125–7, 279, 338, 354, 410, 425, 428, 440, 442–3, 506
Catholic Rural Life Conference, National, 125–7
Chapin, F. Stuart, 543
Charities and Corrections, National Conference of, 182
Charities, *see* Welfare
Child labor in agriculture, 43–5, 351, 353–4
Chittenden, William Lawrence, 412, 546
Churches: 116–33; attendance and membership of, 120–2; attitude toward religion, 504; conflict between, 122; cost of operating, 120; denominationalism of, 118; in major type-farming areas, 353–4, 375, 391, 393, 408, 425–6, 428–9, 443, 445, 455, 482–3, 490; in Spanish-American community, 506; organizations of, 71–2; part of, in welfare functions, 180; programs of, 123–4; reorganization of, 118, 124–5; role of, in recreation, 195; salaries and training of ministers of, 118–19, 125, 128
Churches, Committee on Town and Country, 127–31
Coffin, Robert P. Tristram, 212–13
Cohen, David, 357
Collins, Selwyn D., 164–5
Colonies, in early United States, 14–15, 19
Commercialized agriculture: 11, 285–6, 290–1; in colonial period, 24; in major type-farming areas, 345–6, 363, 366, 372–3, 380–1, 390–1, 404, 416, 418–21, 434–45, 447, 450; relationship of, to farmers' revolts, 510–12, 517, 519; trend toward, 523–4
Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, 160–1
Committee on Town and Country Churches, 127–31
Commons, John R., 430
Communication: 200, 202; effects of, 9, 35, 60, 66–7, 78, 500, 523, 529, 531; effects of, on group relationships in major type-farming areas, 355, 373–5, 377, 393, 403, 407–9, 417, 450, 453–5
Communities: 55–77; cultural studies of six, 504–7; definition of, 55, 57; delineation of, 62–3; development and early studies of, 4, 6–7, 59–60; differences between neighborhoods and, 57–9; in corn belt, 374–7; in cotton belt, 354–6; in dairy areas, 422, 425–6; in general and self-sufficing areas, 448, 453–5, 457; in major type-farming areas, 485, 487; in range-livestock areas, 406–7; in Western specialty-crop areas, 441–2; in wheat areas, 392–3; institutions of, 62, 92–133; kinds of, 33, 55–6, 325; number and size of, 57, 60; relationships of, to agencies, 61–2, 72–3; services of, 62, 308; trends in, 60–1, 73, 75–6, 532–3
Community organization: complexity of, 71–2; influence of, upon community programs, 64
Conservation Association, County Agricultural, 135–7
Consumer-Purchases Study, 200–3, 504
Cooperation, American Institute of, 432
Cooperatives: 68–71, 126, 176, 280, 408, 517–18, 532–3; in major type-farming areas, 353, 377, 394, 397, 408, 410–11, 423, 428, 432, 437, 442, 455, 482
Coordinated Hospital Service Plan, 176–7
Corn belt: 24, 360–82; attitudes, values, and traditions of, 360–1, 363, 367–8, 377–81; crops in, 364–6; family-size, commercialized farms in, 366; group relationships in, 373–8; level of living in, 368, 382; location of, 360–1, 369; main characteristics of, 360–2; mechanization in, 362, 367–8, 378, 380; nationality groups in, 363, 366, 369, 371, 375; rhythms of life and work in, 367–8; settlement of, 362–3, 366, 369; trends in, 381–2; variations within, 361–2, 368–71
Cornell University, 70
Cotton belt: 344–59; attitudes and values in, 356–7; cotton production in, 346–8; culture of, 24; group relationships in,

Cotton belt (*continued*)
353–6; location of, 344–6; mechanization in, 344, 349; population changes in, 358–9; slack-work periods in, 355; soil erosion in, 348; tenants in, 344–5, 349, 358; urban industry in, 352
Cotton Council, National, 353
Council on Intergovernmental Relations, 151–4
Counties: area and population of, 132; changes in, 148–50; county-manager plan for, 150; importance and functions of, 134–8, 144–7; in major type-farming areas, 355–6, 373–7, 379, 425, 456, 484; in selected areas, 134, 137–40, 148; number of, in United States, 138; primary divisions of, 139–40; relation of, to trade communities, 134–5
Country Life Commission, 6–7
Country Life Conference, American, 129, 131
County Agricultural Conservation Association, 135–7
Craig, G. H., 546
Cronin, Francis D., 546
Culture: 329–43; as affected by varying factors in rural life, 9–10, 331–2; as determinant of standards and levels of living, 297, 302–4, 306–7; broadly defined, 329–30; cultural islands, 338, 342–3, 350, 392, 403, 409–10; cultural regions, 332–40; in major type-farming areas, 24, 307, 357, 373, 377–9, 381–2, 384, 386, 388, 399, 402–3, 411–12, 417, 427, 429–30, 435–6, 443–4, 447–8, 458–60; influence of early settlement on, 15–17, 19, 22; influence of nationality groups on, 29–32; involving attitudes and values, 342; participation of farmers in nation's, 3, 12; study of, in six communities, 504–7; *see also* Attitudes, Tradition
Curry, John Steuart, 206
Curtis, Henry S., 539

Dairy areas: 414–33; attitudes and values in, 427–30; characteristics of, 417, 420, 427, 433; expansion of, 430–1; group relationships in, 422–6; local government in, 424–5; location of, 414–16; rhythms of life and work in, 417–18; trends in, 430–3
Dale, Edward Everett, 412, 546
Davis, Chester C., 549
Dawson, Howard, 93, 105
Death rates, 158–60, 235–6
Debts, farm, 271, 273–5, 346–7, 372–3, 380, 473
Dehn, Adolf, 206
Delta Council, 353
Dental Association, American, 167
Dental Association, National, 167
Diocesan Directors of Rural Life, 126
Dix, Dorothea L., 181
Dobie, J. Frank, 412, 546
Dodd, William E., 545
Dorn, Harold F., 159, 538
Ducoff, Louis J., 542
Durand, John D., 541

Eaton, Allen H., 547
Education: adult, *see* Extension Service, agricultural; and democracy, 94, 110–12; as component of level of living, 298, 300–2, 307; comparisons of rural and urban differences in, 298, 300–2; development of agricultural, 525; equality of opportunity in, 95; illiterates, 98; improvements in, 101–2; in major type-farming areas, 379, 459, 490; statistics on, 92–3; status of population, 228–30; vocational, 102–4; *see also* Schools
Education, American Council on, 96–7
Education Association of the United States, National, 96–7, 537
Education, United States Office of, 103, 537
Education, White House Conference on Rural, 92, 104–5
Educational status, *see* Population
Edwards, Alba M., 245, 541
Ehrenburg, Ilya, 296
Eldridge, Hope T., 240
Elliott, F. F., 544, 548
Embree, E. R., 545
Employment Act of 1946, 192
Employment, agricultural: 281–5, 474–5; composition of, 250–4; in major type-farming areas, 474–5; in Western specialty-crop areas, 437–41, 445; influence of farm work on family life, 41–5
Engle, Paul, 207
English Poor Relief Act, 178–9
Ensminger, Douglas, 58, 70, 538
Equity, American Society of, 379, 394, 510, 512, 515, 517–18
Equity Cooperative Exchange, 515
Equity, Farmers' Society of, 515, 517
Equity Union, Farmers', 515, 517–18
Experiment stations, agricultural, 7, 378, 525
Extension Service, agricultural: 50, 71–2, 76, 95, 102, 105–9, 112, 132, 195, 204–5, 208, 269, 359, 394, 408, 422–3, 482, 525; functions of, 75, 105–9; number participating in programs of, 71; relation of, to local government, 135, 140; voluntary leaders in, 109

Fabricant, Solomon, 541
Fair Labor Standards Act, 192
Fairlie, J. A., 538
Families, farm: effects of mechanization on, 524; in major type-farming areas, 344–5, 349, 351, 354–5, 361, 366–7, 381, 388, 391–2, 396, 398, 405–6, 408–9, 418–19, 421, 440–1, 447–8, 450, 452–4, 475–6, 478–9; shift of, from self-sufficiency to commercialization, 526
Family life: in relation to group activities, 59–61; influence of farm work on, 41–5, 341, 498–500; patriarchal type of, 45–8; rural-urban differences in, 8–9, 39–42; trends in, 46–7; *see also* Families, farm
Family life cycle, 50–1, 366, 381, 391, 396, 405, 409, 418–20
Family workers, unpaid, 41–5, 281–2; *see also* Employment, agricultural
Faris, John T., 545
Farm Bureau Federation, American, 71–2, 195, 205, 353, 377, 379, 408, 423, 442, 456, 482, 510, 515–19
Farm Credit Administration, 269, 277–8, 280
Farm Foundation, 131, 279, 538
Farm Labor Union, National, 353
Farm laborers: composition of, 283–5; decline in status of, 529–30; in major type-farming areas, 322, 366, 388–9, 406, 409–10, 437–43, 474–5, 478–9; migratory farm laborers, 44–5, 190, 284–5, 288–90, 306, 388–9, 439–43; outlook for, 292–4; relatives of operators as, 42; wages and earnings of, 286–8, 290
Farm Loan Act of 1916, National, 278
Farm organizations, general: 510, 512–18; in major type-farming areas, 353, 377, 379, 394, 408, 423, 442, 455–6
Farm population: composition of, 27–9, 228–32; definition of, 221, 223; effects of World War II on, 244; geographic distribution of, 221–4, 226; in major type-farming areas, 344, 350, 360, 370–1, 386–7, 397, 403, 416, 420, 436, 445, 448, 467; occupational composition of, 221, 223, 245–61; size of and trends in, 218–20, 242–4, 527–8; *see also* Population, Rural Population
Farm Security Administration, *see* Farmers Home Administration
Farm workers, *see* Employment, agricultural, Farm laborers, Labor force
Farmer Cooperatives, National Council of, 70–1, 432
Farmer-employers, 285–6
Farmer-Labor Party, 517
Farmer-Labor Union, 517
Farmers' Alliance: 377, 379, 394, 510, 512–14, 517–20; Agricultural Wheel as part of, 513–14; Brothers of Freedom as part of, 513–14; Colored Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union, 514; Louisiana Farmers' Union as part of, 513–14; National (Northern) Alliance, 514; Southern Farmers' Alliance, 513–14
Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America, 71, 176, 195, 205, 377, 393–4, 408, 423, 482, 510, 512, 514–15, 517–19
Farmers' Equity Union, 515, 517–18
Farmers' Holiday Association, 516–17
Farmers Home Administration, 71–2, 74, 76, 174–5, 269, 277, 279, 296, 359
Farmers' Movement, in the United States, 510–21
Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, 514
Farmers, retired, 372
Farmers' revolts, 379–80, 394, 510–12, 516–17, 519–20
Farmers' Society of Equity, 515, 517
Farmers Union, *see* Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America
Farmers Union Hospital Association, 176, 408
Farms, family-size, 11, 41, 268–76, 281–2, 366, 418–19, 438–9; *see also* Families, farm
Faulkner, William, 357
Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, 127, 537
Federal Security Agency, 103, 537, 539
Fertility: crude birth rates, 235; differentials and trends, 236–9; gross reproduction rates, 238–9; net reproduction rates, 236–8; of farm women, 49; rural-urban differences in, 233–6
Firey, Walter, 547
Fish and Wildlife Service, 204
Fisher, Commodore B., 549
Fisher, Dorothy Canfield, 430
Flanagan, John Theodore, 545
Folk knowledge and practices, 525–7
Foreign-born: 318–20; in farm population, 26–32, 318–19; in major type-farming areas, 363, 366, 369, 387, 403, 420, 435, 440, 448–9, 466; *see also* Nationality groups
Forest Service, United States, 204
Formal organizations: 65–6, 70–2, 76; as affected by type-farming in locality, 342; as special-interest groups, 61, 487; as sponsors of recreation, 198–9; in major type-farming areas, 353–6, 374–7, 391–2, 394, 398, 407–8, 412–13, 423–6, 441–2, 454–6, 482–4, 487; increase in, as informal associations decline, 532–3

Forster, G. W., 310, 323, 544
Forster, M. C., 544
Fortune Magazine, 501–2, 504, 508
Fox, Dixon Ryan, 545
Fox, John, 460
Frazier, E. Franklin, 47, 535
Frederick, John Towner, 430
Frost, Robert, 212, 430
Fryer, Lee, 544
Future Farmers of America, 205, 482

Gallup, George, 501
Galpin, Charles J., 7, 116, 540
Gardiner, Dorothy, 547
Gardner, Ella, 198
General and self-sufficing areas: 446–63; attitudes and values in, 458–60; group relationships in, 453–8; location of, 446–8; migration from, 451, 461; off-farm work in, 447, 452, 458, 461; settlement of, 448–50; tourist trade in, 461; trends in, 460–2
Giddings, Franklin H., 6
Gilfillan, Archer B., 546
Gillette, J. M., 7
Glasgow, Ellen A. G., 430, 547
Gleaners, Ancient Order of, 514, 518
Goldmann, Franz, 538
Goldschmidt, Walter R., 547
Goodsell, Wylie D., 548
Grange, National, 71, 195, 205, 377, 379, 393, 408, 423, 442, 455, 482, 510, 512–14, 517–21
Gray, L. C., 541
Grazing Districts, Taylor, 410
Great Lakes cutover, 463
Great Plains Committee, 546
Greenback Party, 379, 520
Greene, Josiah, 430, 547
Group relationships: 46, 65–77, 317–18, 321; as recreation, 198–9; changes in, 72–7; in major type-farming areas, 353–6, 373–8, 391–4, 406–11, 422–6, 441–3, 453–8, 481–7; primary and secondary, 90, 155, 532–3
Groves, Ernest R., 535
Gulf Coast fringe areas, 462

Hagood, Margaret Jarman, 304, 470, 535, 542–3
Hainsworth, R. G., 548
Ham, William T., 542
Hamilton, C. Horace, 540
Hamlets, 78–81
Hamsun, Knut, 496
Handicraft Guild, Southern Highland, 460
Harris, Marshall, 541
Hauser, Philip M., 540
Havighurst, Walter, 545
Health: 157–77; as component of level of living, 300–1; Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, 160–1; illness, 160–3; mental, 181; National Survey of, 1935–36, 161–2; pattern of care in rural areas, 163–70; postwar plans for, 166; rejection rates during World War II, 157–8; rural-urban comparisons in, 158–60; 300–1; *see also* Welfare
Health Association, American Public, 543
Health Association, Sand Hills, 408
Health, National Institute of, 163–4
Health organizations: 173–7; experimental program of United States Department of Agriculture, 175–6; medical program of Farm Security Administration, 174–5; personnel and trends in, 173–4; voluntary prepayment plans, 176, 408
Health Service Act, Public, 173
Health Service, United States Public, 73, 102, 173–4
Helper, Hinton Rowan, 460
Hibbard, Benjamin H., 541
Hicks, John D., 549
Hoffer, C. R., 87, 536
Holley, W. C., 545
Hollingshead, August B., 315, 544
Home-consumed farm products, by major type-farming areas, 366, 404, 435, 450–1, 470–2
Home Missions Council of North America, 122, 127
Homestead Act, 30, 268, 369, 388, 402
Homesteading, 25–6, 30, 268, 369, 387–8, 402
Hospital Association, Farmers Union, 176, 408
Hospital Association, Northwest Community, 176
Hospital Association, South Plains Cooperative, 176
Hospital Service Plan, Coordinated, 176–7
Hospital Survey and Construction Act, 147, 176–7, 301
Housing, 40–1, 298–300, 302, 307, 404
Hughes, Gwendolyn S., 536
Hughes, Hatcher, 460
Hutton, Graham, 361, 382, 545

Ideologies, *see* Attitudes, Culture, Tradition
Immigrants, *see* Foreign-born, Nationality groups
Income: as affected by family-life cycle, 50–1; as component of level of living, 168–70, 298–300, 306–7; comparisons between rural and urban, 257–8, 298–300; comparisons of agricultural workers' and industrial workers', 287–8; comparisons of hired workers' and employ-

Income (*continued*)
ers', 286; of migratory farm workers, 290; *see also* Income, farm
Income, farm, in major type-farming areas, 313, 349–50, 360, 404, 447, 450–1, 453, 468–70
Industrialization, effects of, on occupational composition, 245–50
Industrialized farming, 274, 285–6, 288–91, 437–9, 445, 523–4
Industries, rural, 90–1, 254–5, 258–61
Informal group activities: 65–8; as recreation, 198–9; in major type-farming areas, 355, 373–4, 392–3, 407–9, 426, 441–2, 453–5, 483–4; influence of, on community organization, 66
Intergovernmental Relations, Council on, 151–4
International Council of Religious Education, 127
Interstate Commerce Commission, 287
Irrigation farming, 323–4, 434–45
Isolation: as it affects attitudes, 499–500; effect of, on farm-family life, 39; in major type-farming areas, 393, 396, 404–5, 409, 454, 457, 460–2; lessening of, 9, 35, 46–7, 522–3; of hired farm workers, 283; rural social, 9

Jackson, G. P., 547
Jamieson, Stuart, 542
Jocher, Katharine, 544
Johnson, Charles S., 544–5
Johnson, Sherman, 292
Johnstone, Paul, 496
Jones, Lewis Webster, 161
Jones, Ronald W., 548

Kains, Maurice Grenville, 296
Kaufman, Harold F., 538
Kephart, Horace, 547
Kile, Orville M., 549
Kirkpatrick, E. L., 51, 304, 542–4
Kneier, C. M., 538
Koch, Frederick H., 210, 539
Kolb, J. H., 81, 151, 321, 536–7, 541, 544
Kollmorgen, Walter M., 506, 536, 544, 548
Kroeber, A. L., 337

La Follette, Robert M., 430, 517
Labor force: in major type-farming areas, 351, 354, 361, 366–7, 388–9, 406, 418–19, 439–41, 452–3, 474–9; trends in occupational composition, 246; *see also* Employment, agricultural, Farm laborers, Occupational composition, Population
Labor productivity: 292–3; comparisons in, 247; effect of, on level of living, 246; increase in, 246
Labor relations in agriculture, 290–1
Lampland, Ruth, 539
Lancaster, Lane W., 138, 149, 538
Land Grant College Committee on Organization and Policy, 151
Land-Use Planning Program, 150–1
Landis, Benson Y., 127
Landis, Paul H., 537, 540
Landowners, 264, 268–76
Landownership: among Negroes, 316; Bankhead-Jones Tenant Purchase Act, 279–80; by federal government, 268; by multiple farm owners, 274, 321–2; effects of prosperity and depression periods upon, 277–8; effects of rising standards of living upon, 530; in colonial period, 14; in fee simple absolute, 276; in major type-farming areas, 273, 356, 371–2, 380, 394–5, 420, 428, 453, 458, 488, 496; plantation farming as obstacle to, 276–7; public promotion of, 268–9, 276, 278
Lanier, Sidney, 212
Larson, Laurence M., 546
Lawler, Eugene S., 96–7, 537
Leadership, 64–5, 67, 356, 379, 397; *see also* voluntary leaders *under* Extension Service, agricultural
Lee, Roger I., 161
Legg, Caroline E., 198
Legislation, social, exclusion of farm laborers from, 290–1; *see also* Social Security Act
Leisure: constructive use of, 110, 195, 213; in major type-farming areas, 355, 357, 367, 389, 393, 396, 409, 411, 448, 477–8; patterns of, 195–8
Leonard, Olen, 302, 505, 536, 548
Lesser, Simon O., 93, 537
Level of living: 295–308; components of, 297–304; factors determining, 306–8, 472, 525; family expenditure for, 299–300, 307; in major type-farming areas, 350, 368, 382, 404, 410, 421, 436, 453, 470–2; in relation to disadvantaged groups and areas, 304, 306; interrelated with standard of living, 295–6; rural-urban differences in, 297–304; trends in, 530
Lewis, Sinclair, 430
Libraries, 109–11
Library Association, American, 110–11, 537
Ligutti, Monsignor Luigi, 127
Lindsay, Vachel, 212
Literature: 496; in major type-farming areas, 357, 412, 429–30, 459–60
Little Country Theatre Movement, 207–10
Lively, Charles E., 5, 166, 540

Local government: 134–56; costs of, 145, 147–8; development and functions of, 137–8, 144–5, 154–6, 302; importance of, to farmer, 134–7; in major type-farming areas, 318, 355–6, 373–7, 379, 393, 424–5, 456, 484–5; in selected areas, 134, 137–40, 148; reorganization of, 150–6; units of, 138–44, 155–6; welfare functions of, *see* Welfare
Locke, Harvey J., 535
Lomax, Alan, 412, 546
Lomax, John A., 412, 546
Longmore, T. Wilson, 538
Loomer, Charles W., 546
Loomis, Charles P., 51, 302, 505, 535–6, 548
Lorge, Irving, 536
Lorimer, Frank, 535, 540

Machinery, *see* Mechanization
MacLeish, Kenneth, 505, 548
Makover, Henry B., 543
Malin, James C., 387
Mangus, A. R., 332, 334–6, 338, 539, 544
Manny, Theodore B., 137, 144, 538, 540
Manufacturing, rural workers in, 254–5, 258–9, 261–2
Marital status, *see* Population
Marshall, D. G., 78, 537
Mather, William G., 119, 537
Mayo, Selz C., 543
McCune, Wesley, 549
McKain, Walter C., Jr., 543
McKay, Allis, 547
McWilliams, Carey, 542, 547
Mead, Elwood, 541
Mechanization: 11; effects of, on economic and social trends, 100, 220, 242, 247, 292–3, 322–6, 528; in major type-farming areas, 349, 362, 367–8, 378, 380, 384, 386, 388–9, 395, 397, 405, 412, 419, 436, 438, 445, 451, 489–90, 524; trend in, 524–5; value of implements by selected states, 479–80
Medical Association, American, 167, 172–3
Medical care: as component of level of living, 298, 300–1, 307; in relation to income, 168–73; need and demand for, defined, 161; professional organizations concerned with, 167; rural-urban comparisons of, 164–5; trends in, 166–70, 408, 508
Medical Care, Committee on the Costs of, 160–1
Meier, Lola, 166
Meigs, Peveril, 547
Mennonites, 279, 307, 326, 338, 420, 442–4, 506
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 158, 235
Migration: effects of economic conditions on, 241–4; effects of residence requirements for relief on, 186–7; farm-to-city, 52–4, 236, 239–44, 528; in major type-farming areas, 358–9, 371–2, 382, 387, 397, 403, 412, 431, 439, 444, 451, 461, 466; out of Great Plains, 25–6; westward, 17–23
Migratory farm laborers, *see* Farm laborers
Milk Producers' Federation, National Cooperative, 432
Miller, Mary (Merrill), 547
Millspaugh, Arthur C., 149
Minor type-farming areas, 462–3
Moe, Edward O., 504, 536, 546, 549
Monroe, Day, 539
Moore, Arthur L., 314, 546
Moore, Harry E., 332–3, 544
Morgan, Arthur E., 536
Mormons, 32, 34, 48, 279, 326, 331, 338, 342, 436, 438–9, 441–4
Morse, Warren W., 538
Mott, Frederick D., 538
Murchison, C. T., 545
Myrdal, Gunnar, 544

National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 125–7
National Conference of Charities and Corrections, 182
National Conference of Social Work, 182
National Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation, 432
National Cotton Council, 353
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, 70–1, 432
National Dental Association, 167
National Education Association of the United States, 96–7, 537
National Farm Labor Union, 353
National Farm Loan Act of 1916, 278
National Grange, *see* Grange, National
National Institute of Health, 163–4
National Opinion Research Center, 167
National Recreation Association, 204–5
National Resources Committee, 540–1, 543–4
National Resources Planning Board, 300, 307, 337, 348, 539, 543
National Youth Administration, 189
Nationality groups: in early settlement, 10–11, 14–17, 19, 22–3; in major type-farming areas, 350–1, 354, 363, 366, 369, 371, 375, 386–7, 391–3, 399–400, 403–4, 406, 409–10, 420, 435, 440, 442, 448–9, 457; on farms, 26–32, 251–2, 289, 316–17

Natural increase: rural-urban differences in, 233–6; stability in rate of, 241
Negroes, 13–16, 22–3, 29–30, 47, 63, 95, 98, 198, 252, 289, 304, 315–18, 322–3, 350–1, 354–5, 358–9, 440, 457, 466, 482–3, 485, 487, 489, 503, 514
Neighborhoods: 55–77; definition of, 57; delineation of, 62–3; development of, 59–60; differences between communities and, 57–9; in corn belt, 373–4, 379; in cotton belt, 355; in dairy areas, 426; in general and self-sufficing areas, 448, 453–5, 457; in major type-farming areas, 485; in range-livestock areas, 406–7; in Western specialty-crop areas, 441–2; in wheat areas, 392–3; number of, 60; on decline as secondary associations increase, 532–3; relationships of, to agencies, 61–2, 72–3; services of, 62
Nelson, Lowry, 5, 122, 537, 547
Net reproduction rates, *see* Fertility
Niederfrank, E. J., 547
Nonpartisan League, 394, 512, 516–19
North, C. C., 544
North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, 171–2
Northwest Community Hospital Association, 176
Norton, John K., 96–7, 537

Occupation: characteristics of farming as, 8–9; importance of, 245; income differentials in, 257–8; nonfarm, among rural residents, 256–9; of farming as it affects attitudes, 498–500; polls on farming as, 502–4
Occupational composition: effect of natural resources on, 260–1; nonfarm occupations of rural residents, 254–61; of the hired farm working force, 284; of the rural population, 245–61; regional differences in, 260–2
Odum, Howard W., 182, 332–4, 357, 539, 544–5, 548
Off-farm work: 249–50; in major type-farming areas, 355, 361, 369, 381, 389–91, 395, 403–4, 416–17, 439, 447, 451–2, 458, 461, 467, 472; trend toward, 325, 527
Ogburn, William F., 535, 544
O'Hara, Father Edwin V., 126
Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance, *see* Social Security Act
Opinion, American Institute of Public, 501, 508
Opinion, public: definition of, 500–1; farm organizations as pressure groups in farming, 379–80; of farmers on industrial labor, 508; of farmers on international affairs, 507; of farmers on medical care, 508; of farmers on role of government, 507–8; polling of, 501–4; voting behaviors of farmers as a segment of, 497–8
Opinion Research Center, National, 167
Osborn, Frederick, 535, 540

Pangburn, Weaver Weddell, 539
Parent-Teachers Association, 205
Park, Robert E., 337
Park Service, National, 204
Part-time farmers: 249–50, 325; increase in, 527; *see also* Off-farm work, Suitcase farmers
Participation, social; *see* Group relationships
Patten, Marjorie, 536
Pennock, Jean L., 538
Percy, William Alexander, 357
Perquisites, *see* Wages, agricultural
Personality traits: in major type-farming areas, 345, 356–7, 360–1, 377–80, 396–7, 403, 411–12, 416, 427, 443–4, 448, 458–60, 491; of farmers, 495–500, 504, 532–3; of peasant versus commercialized farmers, 523
Phillips, M. Ogden, 535, 546, 548
Piper, Edwin Ford, 212
Plambeck, Hans, 547
Plantations, 30, 276–7, 346–7, 350
Polson, Robert A., 536–7
Population: age composition of, 228–9; characteristics of, 217–19, 228–32; distribution of, 222, 224–5, 227, 262–3; educational status of, 228, 230; growth of, 16, 18–21, 218–20; in corn belt, 360, 370–1; in cotton belt, 344, 350–2, 359; in dairy areas, 414, 416, 420, 431–2; in general and self-sufficing areas, 448–9; in major type-farming areas, 465–7, 490; in range-livestock areas, 403–4; in Western specialty-crop areas, 436, 440; in wheat areas, 386–7, 397; labor-force participation rates of, 228, 231–2; marital status of, 228, 231; race and nativity composition of, 228, 232; rural-urban and farm-nonfarm differences in, 228–32; rural-urban distribution of, 221–2, 527–8; sex composition of, 228, 230–1; *see also* Farm population, Fertility, Foreign-born, Rural population, Rural-nonfarm population
Population centers: distribution of counties by largest, 148, 223, 226–7; incorporated places, 79–80; types of, 79
Populist Party, 379, 514, 520–1
Poverty, *see* Welfare
Pre-emption Act, 30, 268

President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, 278–9
President's Committee on Recent Social Trends, 182–5, 539
Problem rural areas, 309–11
Production and Marketing Administration, 72–4, 76
Protestants, *see* Churches
Public Health Service Act, 173
Publics, farmer, 518–21

Raine, William MacLeod, 546
Rand McNally Commercial Atlas, 80, 85
Range-livestock areas: 24–5, 399–413; attitudes, ideals and values of, 402–3, 411–12; "Cattle Kingdom," 402–3; group relationships in, 406–11; level of living in, 404; location and characteristics of, 399–402; population characteristics of, 403–4; rhythms of life and work in, 404–5; sub-groups in, 33–4, 342, 399–400, 403–4, 406–7, 409–10, 505–6; trends in, 412–13
Rankin, J. O., 539
Raper, Arthur F., 506, 544–5, 549
Rapking, A. H., 124
Ratcliffe, S. C., 490, 548
Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, 496
Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 185
Recreation: 194–213; agencies and services of, 195, 203–6; attitude in rural areas toward, 194–5; definition of, 194; expenditures for rural, 199–203, 300, 307; relationship of, to art, 206–11; role of, in rural life, 194–5; rural and urban, 200–3, 206; types of, in rural areas, 198–203, 205; *see also* Leisure
Recreation Association, National, 204–5
Redfield, Robert, 544
Regions, Cultural: 329–43; concepts of, 332–8; cores and fringes of, 338–9, 342–3; development of, 23–5; type-farming areas as, 330–2, 339–42, 344–491
Reid, Ira de A., 544–5
Relief, *see* Welfare
Religion, *see* Churches
Religious Education, International Council of, 127
Renner, George T., 337
Research: importance of rural, to understanding American culture, 3; in rural life becoming more complex, 7; reform stimulus to, 5–6; rural sociology based on social, 3–7
Research Committee on Social Trends, Inc., 185
Resources Committee, National, 540–1, 543–4
Resources Planning Board, National, 300, 307, 337, 348, 539, 543
Rhythms of life and work: as influenced by tradition, 303; as they affect leisure and recreation, 195–8; in corn belt, 367–8; in cotton belt, 351–2; in dairy areas, 417–18; in general and self-sufficing areas, 452–3; in major type-farming areas, 476–9; in range-livestock areas, 404–5; in Western specialty-crop areas, 439; in wheat areas, 389–91, 396; seasonality of farm work, 197, 253–4
Rice, Alice Caldwell (Hegan), 460
Rice, Stuart A., 497, 549
Rich, Mark, 537
Roemer, Milton I., 538
Rölvaag, O. E., 430, 496, 546
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 185, 192, 304
Roosevelt, Theodore, 6–7
Roper, Elmo, 501–2, 549
Ross, E. A., 430
Ross, Malcolm, 548
Royce, Josiah, 337
Rural Electrification Administration, 72, 75, 269, 359
Rural-farm population, *see* Farm population
Rural-nonfarm population: 10; characteristics of, 223, 226, 228–32; composition of, 228–32; geographic distribution of, 221–3, 225–7; in major type-farming areas, 360, 370, 403–4, 416–17, 431–2, 467, 490; increase of, 527, 531; size and trends of, 218–20
Rural population: composition of, 228–32; definition of, 217–18; farm and nonfarm comparisons of, 221–32; geographic distribution of, 221–7; in major type-farming areas, 344, 350, 360, 370–1, 386–7, 397, 403–4, 416–17, 420, 431–2, 436, 445, 448, 467, 490; occupational composition of, 245–61; size and trends of, 218–20
Rural-urban comparisons: 162–5, 228, 464–5; decreasing differences, 531; importance of, in rural social research, 7–12; in fertility, 236–9; in level of living, 297–304; in public welfare, 187–90, 193; in recreation, 200–3; *see also* Population
Rurality, degree of: by major type-farming areas, 466–7; determinant of level of living, 308
Rutledge, Archibald, 357

Sand Hills Health Association, 408
Sandburg, Carl, 212
Sanders, Irwin T., 58
Sanderson, Dwight, 5, 129, 147, 154, 536–8
Schools: 92–115; administrative and attendance units of, 104–5; consolidation

Schools (*continued*) of, 64, 99–101, 112–14; in major type-farming areas, 353–4, 374–6, 391–2, 398, 407–8, 425, 443, 454–5, 459, 482–3; relationship of, with community, 104–5, 112–15; role of, in recreation, 195; rural problems of, 92–100; school districts, 138–44, 425; state and federal aid to, 94–5; *see also* Education
Schuler, Edgar A., 301, 539, 543, 549
Schultz, Theodore, 247
Schwartz, Harry, 293–4, 542
Science: effect of, on leisure, 195–6; folk beliefs and practices giving way to, 525; in major type-farming areas, 359, 378–9, 388, 395, 397, 419, 428, 432, 434, 436–7, 487; rural sociology as, 3–7
Security: as component of level of living, 303; attitude toward, in standard of living, 297; changing method of obtaining, 531–2; in major type-farming areas, 363, 381, 396–8, 411, 428, 438, 488–9
Selective Service Act, 94, 98, 191
Service centers: county seats as, 56, 134–5, 254–5, 376; dependence of, upon farm population, 85–6; effect of, on occupational composition of rural workers, 260; importance of, increasing as primary associations decline, 532; in major type-farming areas, 352, 355, 359, 376, 391–3, 406–7, 426, 456–7, 485–6; number of, 78; origin and development of, 60; patterns of, 83, 85–6; service occupations among rural workers, 262; service zones surrounding, 82–3; specialization of, 83–6; trends relating to, 78–9, 83–5
Service establishments: association of, with trade service zones, 88; average clienteles of, 87–9; number and kinds of, 86; relation of, to level of living, 86–7, 91; relation of, to size of town, 87–8
Settlement, patterns of, 32–6; as factor in isolation, 522–3; determined by types of farming, 32–3; dispersed type of, 33–5, 39; effect of, on family life, 39; in colonial period, 13–14, 17; in major type-farming areas, 33, 350, 362, 384, 386, 391, 398–401, 406, 416–17, 421, 437, 441, 449–50; line type of, 34; perpetuated by tradition, 32; planned, 35–6; plantations as, 32–3; villages as, 17, 32–4
Settlement, periods of: after westward expansion, 25–32; colonial, 13–16; in major type-farming areas, 350, 362–3, 366, 369, 386–8, 391, 397, 402–3, 434, 439–40, 448–50; westward expansion, 17–23
Sewell, William H., 543
Sex composition, *see* Population
Shadid, Michael, 176
Shannon, Fred Albert, 535
Sharecroppers, 264, 266, 322–3, 344–6, 472–3
Shays' Rebellion, 460
Sheppard, Muriel (Earley), 460
Shryock, Henry S., 240
Shugg, Roger W., 542
Sigmund, Jay, 211–12
Sims, Newell L., 7
Smith, J. Russell, 362, 400, 535, 546, 548
Smith, Lillian, 357
Smith, Rockwell C., 538
Smith, T. Lynn, 537, 540
Sneed, Melvin W., 538
Social differentials, rural, *see* Status, social
Social insurance: exclusion of farm laborers from, 293–4; extension of, 294; *see also* Social Security Act
Social Security Act: 187–91, 232, 243, 303; exclusion of farm people from insurance provisions of, 187; extension of, 187, 191–3; local responsibility for general assistance in, 189–90; public assistance grants in, 188–90; public assistance to rural people in, 187, 189–90
Social Security Board, 187–90
Social Trends, Inc., Research Committee on, 185
Social Trends, President's Committee on Recent, 182–5, 539
Social Work, National Conference of, 182
Soil Conservation Service, 64, 71–2, 74, 76, 135–7, 269, 359, 394, 423
South Plains Cooperative Hospital Association, 176
Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, 460
Special-interest groups, *see* Formal organizations
Specialization: as related to tenure, 274–6; effects of, on occupational composition, 245–8; in major type-farming areas, 435, 437–8, 444–5; trends toward, on farms, 11, 526
Speculation: attitude of, developed in westward expansion, 17, 19, 26; in major type-farming areas, 356–7, 372–3, 380–1, 388, 390–1, 394–5, 397–8, 411–12, 437–9, 444, 488–9
Stanbery, V. B., 337
Standard of living: 295–308; among farm-operator families, 530; characteristics of American, 297; culturally determined, 306–7; influence of, upon expansion of service areas, 60–1; influences attitude toward security, 531–2; interrelated with level of living, 295–6; *see also* Level of living
Starch, E. A., 546

Stark, Mabel C., 337
Status, social: 30; as affected by income and tenure, 312–14; as related to problem areas, 309–11; class demarcations, 315–20; determined locality by locality, 311–12; differences in, among white groups, 319–21; effect of occupation on, 245; in major type-farming areas, 30, 354, 368, 373, 381, 393, 403, 409, 436, 440–1, 473; influence of, on attitudes, 506–7; of hired farm workers, 293, 529–30; of nonwhites, 315–18; principal submerged groups, 311–20; rural social differentials, 309–26; social stratification widespread, 314–15; trends in rural social differentials, 320–6
Steen, Herman, 549
Steinbeck, John, 441
Steiner, Jesse Frederick, 540
Stone, A. H., 542
Stores, country, 81–2
Stribling, T. S., 357
Stringfield, Lamar, 460
Stuart, Jesse, 460
Successful Farming, 500–1, 503–4, 507
Suitcase farmers, in wheat areas, 389–91, 395, 398
Swiger, Rachel Rowe, 543

Taeuber, Conrad, 540, 546
Taylor, Carl C., 5, 304, 309–10, 496, 504, 507, 536, 538, 542–4, 546, 549
Taylor, Paul S., 444, 542
Technology, *see* Mechanization, Specialization
Tenancy: 264–8, 270, 272; as affected by kinship and age, 266–7; as affected by mechanization, 322–3; as related to social status, 266, 314; by geographic areas, 267; in major type-farming areas, 341, 346, 349, 354, 358, 381, 390, 420; President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, 278–9; programs for improvement of, in foreign countries, 279–80; types of, 264–6
Tenancy, President's Committee on Farm, 278–9
Tenants: 264–8; factors affecting length of residence of, 268; in major type-farming areas, 472–3; trends in number of, 269–76
Tennessee Valley Authority, 451, 461, 507–8
Tenure: 264–80; as related to home conveniences, 267–8; as related to length of residence, 268; background of problems, 276–8; in major type-farming areas, 344–6, 349, 356, 358, 368, 379, 381, 390, 404, 420, 453, 472–3; programs for improvement of, 278–80
Thompson, E. T., 545
Thompson, Warren S., 540
Thornthwaite, C. Warren, 540
Tobacco areas, 462
Town-country relationships: between farmers and villagers, 60; in major type-farming areas, 392–4, 416–17, 422, 426, 441–2, 456, 486–7; interdependence in, 73–6; of town church, 122
Towns: as affected by type-farming in locality, 342; description of, 80–1; in major type-farming areas, 352, 355, 376, 391–2, 398, 406–7, 416, 422, 456–7, 485–7, 490; persistence of, 78–9; relationships between, 85–6; rural-urban character of, 81; social significance of, 55–6; *see also* Townships
Townships: differences in, by selected areas, 134, 137, 139–40; in major type-farming areas, 356, 373–5, 377, 379, 456, 484–5; number of, 140, 142
Trade areas: 78–91; in major type-farming areas, 352, 359, 375–6, 392–3, 406–7, 426, 456–7, 485–6; zones of, 82–4
Tradition: as determinant of standards and levels of living, 297, 301–4; education, an American, 301–2; in major type-farming areas, 356–7, 359, 377–80, 394, 402–3, 412, 427–30, 436, 439–40, 447–9, 458–62, 488–91; influence of rural life on American, 3; of frontier, 17, 19, 22; perpetuates patterns of settlement, 32; slight in United States, 13; virtue of farmers and farming as, 495–6
Trends, social: in commercialization of agriculture, 523–4; in corn belt, 381–2; in cotton belt, 358–9; in dairy areas, 430–3; in folk arts and skills, 526–7; in general and self-sufficing areas, 460–2; in levels and standards of living, 530; in major type-farming areas, 488–91; in mechanization, 524–5; in nonfarm employment among rural residents, 248–50; in obtaining security, 531–2; in occupational composition, 262–3; in operation of agricultural ladder, 528–9; in part-time farming, 527; in population in rural areas and on farms, 527–8; in primary group associations, 532–3; in public welfare, 182–5, 190–3; in range-livestock areas, 412–13; in rural isolation, 522–3; in rural life, 522–33; in rural-urban differences, 531; in schools and communities, 104; in science, 525; in specialization, 526; in status of hired farm workers, 529–30; in vocational and placement programs, 53–4; in Western specialty-crop areas, 444–5; in wheat areas, 397–8
Trewartha, Glenn T., 79–80

Tripp, Thomas A., 117–19, 121
Truesdell, Leon E., 540
Turner, Frederick Jackson, 22, 46, 535
Turner, H. A., 542
Type-farming areas: as rural universe, 339–42; by belts, 344–491; determine patterns of settlement, 32

Unemployment, 186, 190–1, 288–9
Unemployment compensation, *see* Social Security Act
Union Agriculturalist and Western Prairie Farmer, 495
United States Department of Agriculture, *see* Agriculture, United States Department of
United States Office of Education, 103, 537
United States Public Health Service, 73, 102, 173–4
Urbanization: effect of, on fertility, 239; in major type-farming areas, 414, 416, 431–2, 436, 441, 490

Value systems, *see* Attitudes, Culture, Tradition
Vance, Rupert B., 236, 303, 357, 540, 543–5, 548
Vestal, Stanley, 547
Veterans Administration, 191
Villages: 78–91; as pattern of settlement, 17, 32–4; definition of, 79; description of, 79–80; development of, 88–90; effect of commuter on, 90–1; effect of decentralization of industry upon, 90–1; evolution of, 91; Mormon, 32, 34, 410; number of, 78; sociological significance of, 90; Spanish-American, 17, 32–4, 399, 410; *see also* Towns

Wages, agricultural, 286–8, 290, 440–1, 475
War Department, 52
Warner, W. Lloyd, 544
Washington, Booker T., 357
Wasson, C. R., 538
Webb, Walter Prescott, 402, 412, 547
Welfare: changing concepts and practices of, 182–5; county public welfare units, 144–5, 191; definition of, 178, 182; development of state agencies for, 180–2; emergency relief programs for, 185–7; federal responsibility for meeting needs of, 181, 185–93; meeting needs of, in early America, 178–80; principle of local responsibility for, 179–80, 187; progress in, 191–3; rural relief programs in the depression, 186; rural-urban comparisons of, 186–7, 193; settlement requirements for public aid, 179–80
Wertenbaker, Thomas Jefferson, 535
West, James, 315, 507, 549
Western Progressive Farmers, 517
Western specialty-crop areas: 307, 434–45; attitudes and values in, 443–4; group relationships in, 441–3; location and major characteristics of, 434–41, 443; rhythms of life and work in, 439; settlement of, 439–40; trends in, 444–5
Wheat areas: 24, 383–98; attitudes, values and traditions of, 384, 394–7; descriptions of three, 383, 389–90; group relationships in, 391–4; location and main characteristics of, 383–7, 389–90; mechanization in, 384, 386, 388–9, 395, 397; rhythms of life and work in, 389–91, 396; settlement of, 386–8, 391, 397; trends in, 397–8
Wheeler, Helen W., 304, 542–4
Whelpton, P. K., 541
White House Conference on Rural Education, 92, 104–5
Whitney, V. H., 81
Wickens, D. L., 542
Wiest, Edward, 549
Willard, D. W., 539
Williams, James Mickel, 7, 496, 536
Wilson, Charles M., 460, 548
Wilson, M. L., 107, 132, 495
Wilson, Warren H., 7, 536
Winston, Ellen, 545
Wissler, Clark, 337, 545
Wolfe, Thomas, 460
Women, farm: 48–50; farm work of, 252, 500; housework of, 48–50; in major type-farming areas, 354–5, 366, 405, 412, 418; status of American, 11–12
Wood, Grant, 206–7, 211, 540
Woofter, T. J., Jr., 336, 542, 545, 548
Works, George A., 93, 537
Works Progress Administration, 186, 139, 456, 458
World Almanac, The, 317–18
Wright, Richard, 357
Wynne, Waller, 506, 536, 549

Young, Kimball, 505, 548
Young, Stark, 357
Youth Administration, National, 189

Zimmerman, Carle C., 536, 543

A NOTE ON THE TYPE IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

The text of this book is set in Caledonia, a Linotype face designed by W. A. Dwiggins, the man responsible for so much that is good in contemporary book design and typography. Caledonia belongs to the family of printing types called "modern face" by printers — a term used to mark the change in style of type-letters that occurred about 1800. It has all the hard-working feet-on-the-ground qualities of the Scotch Modern face plus the liveliness and grace that is integral in every Dwiggins "product" whether it be a simple catalogue cover or an almost human puppet.

The book was composed, printed, and bound by The Plimpton Press, Norwood, Massachusetts.

Date Due

JA 31 '51			
JE 13 '51			
AP 21 '54			
(Randolph)			
Rural Church			
~~Reserve~~			
~~Reserve~~			
~~MAY 2 0 '60~~			
[redacted]			
[redacted]			
[redacted]			

HT421 .R94
Rural life in the United States / by
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00139 9106